Paper Trail

Complete Edition

A Deltarune fancomic

written and drawn by LynxGriffin

Paper Trail

Complete Edition

This PDF includes all of 'Paper Trail,' plus some new side comics and stories, behind the scenes material, random doodles, and more!

Paper Trail was started and completed between the releases of chapters one and two of Deltarune. It's told solely as a fan interpretation of where the remaining story could go based on chapter one. As such, it's now an AU compared to Deltarune as a whole.

Deltarune and all related characters and properties belong to Toby Fox. This fan comic was done for the fun of exploring the characters and world. While this version is printable if you would like to do so, this fancomic is not made for profit, and no infringement is intended.

Thank you, and enjoy!

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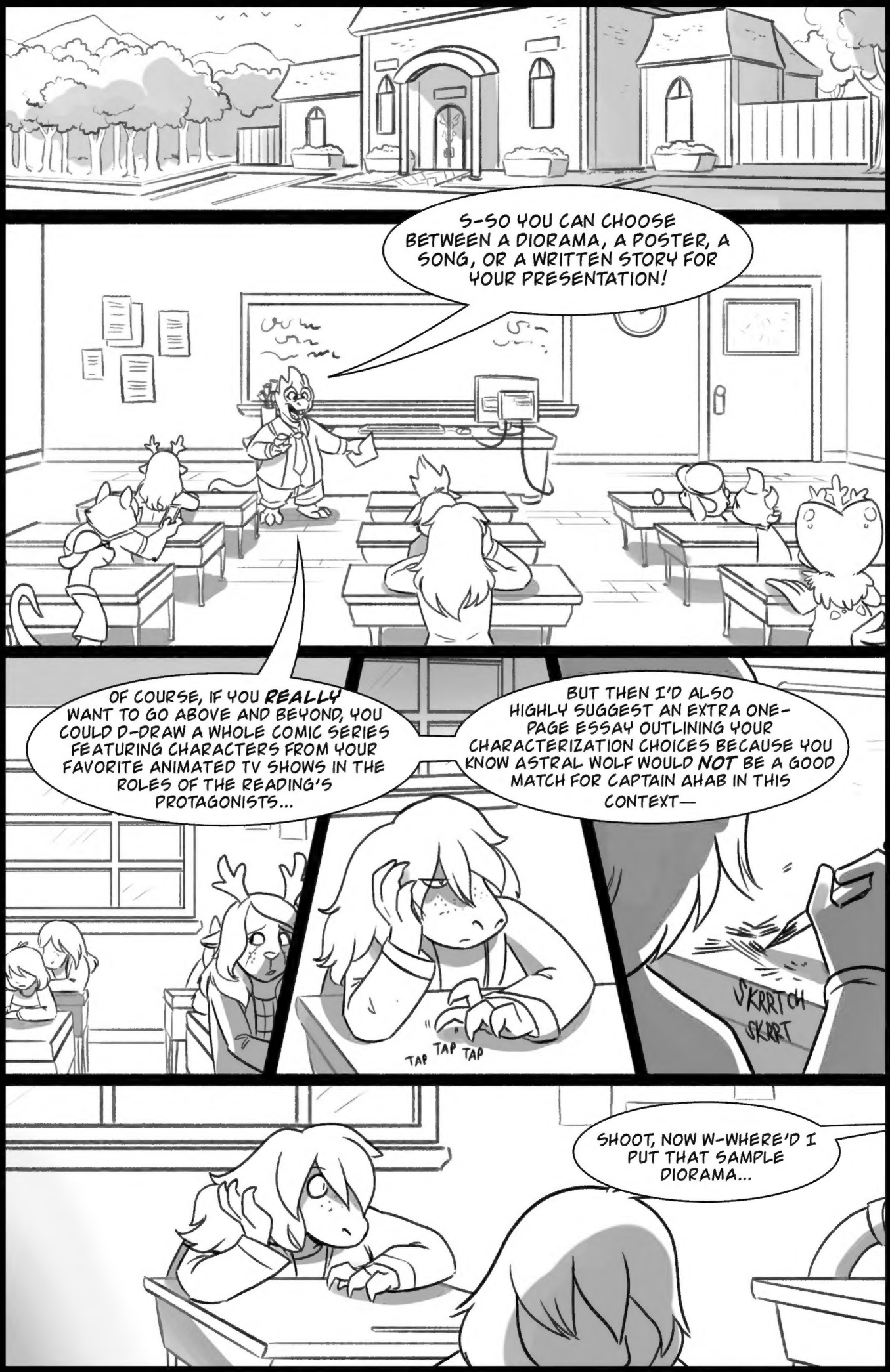
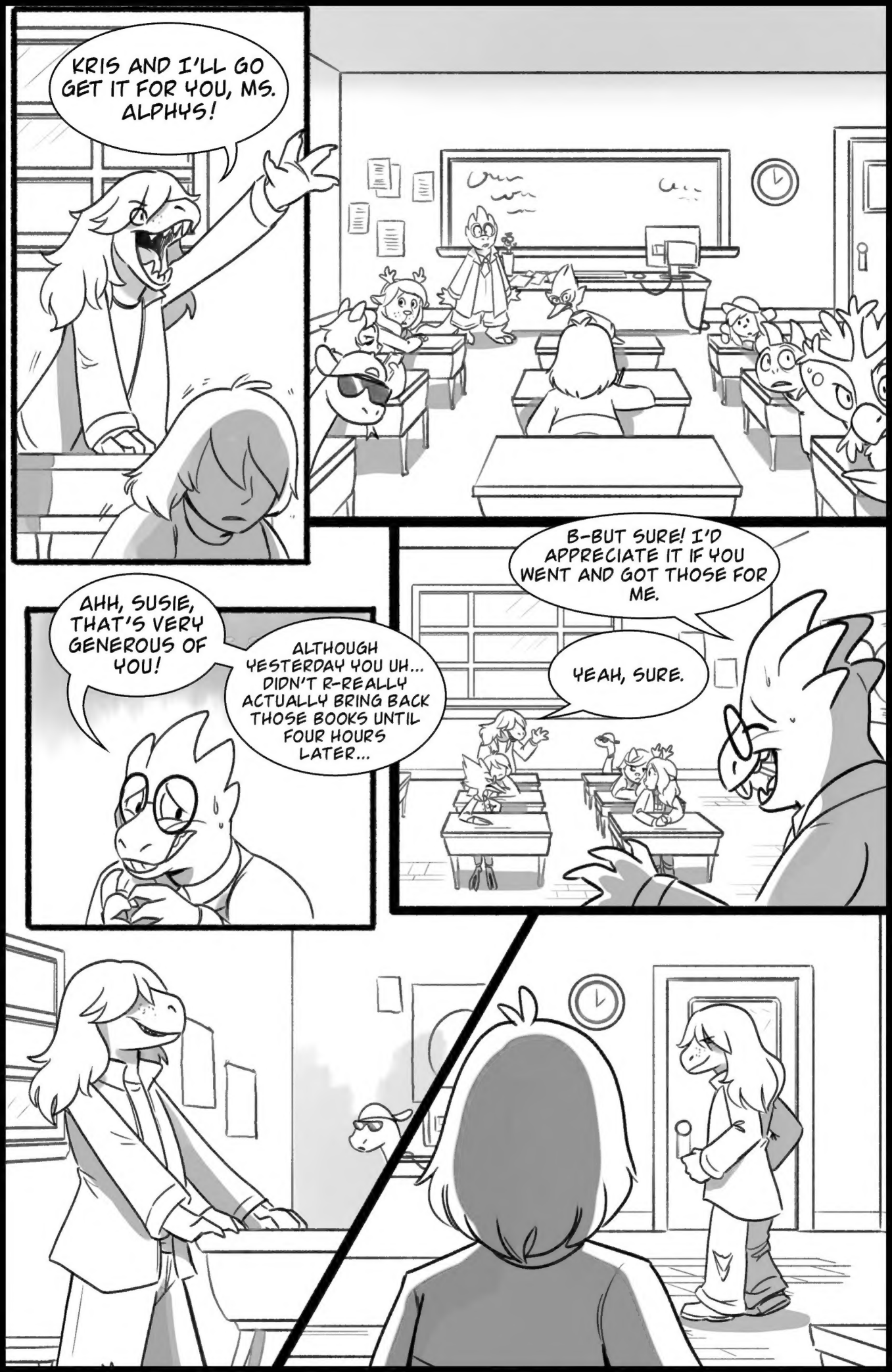
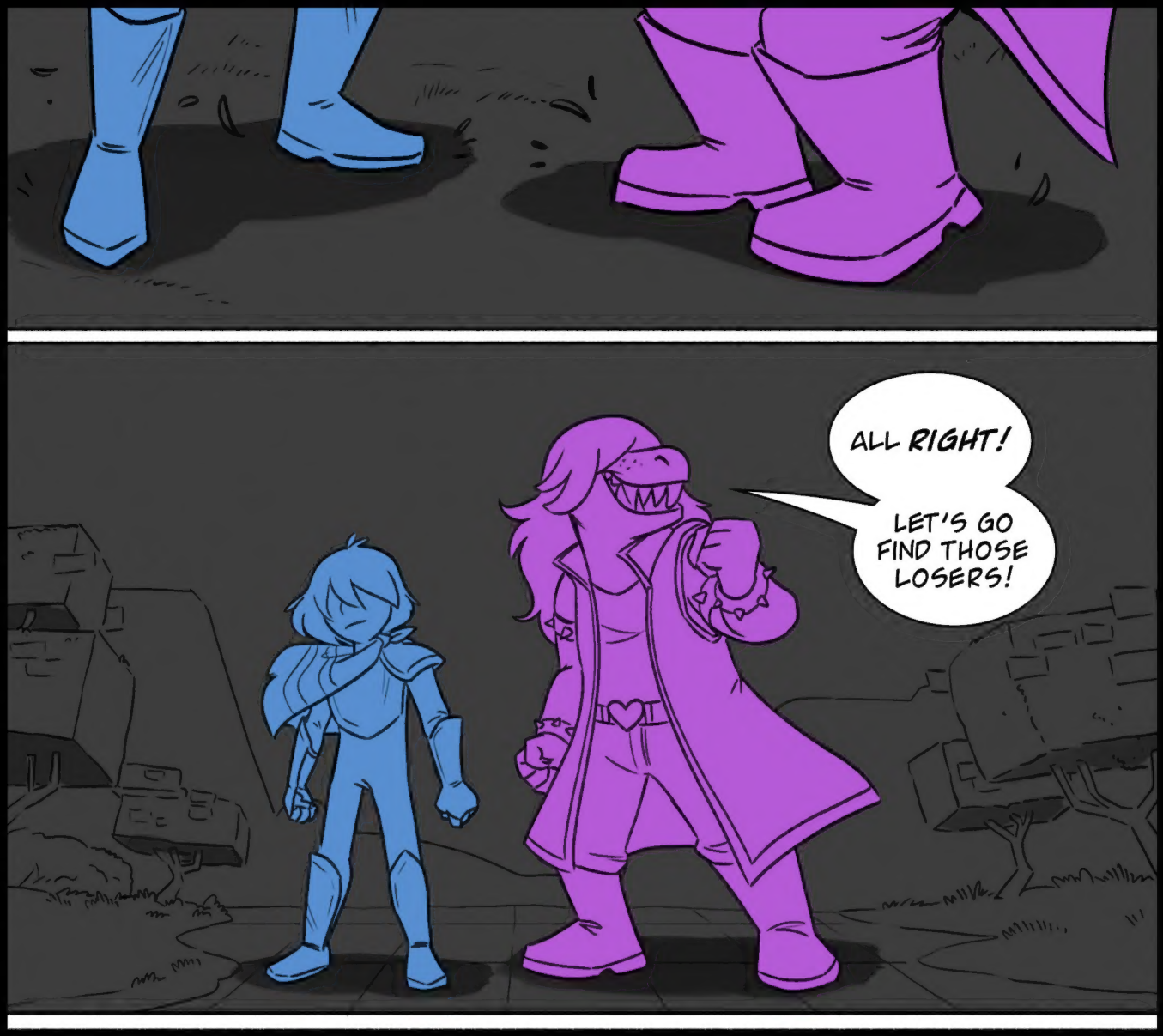
Chapter One
Ralsei


S-SO YOU CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN A DIORAMA, A POSTER, A SONG, OR A WRITTEN STORY FOR YOUR PRESENTATION!
OF COURSE, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND, YOU COULD D-DRAW A WHOLE COMIC SERIES FEATURING CHARACTERS FROM YOUR FAVORITE ANIMATED TV SHOWS IN THE ROLES OF THE READING'S PROTAGONISTS...
BUT THEN I'D ALSO HIGHLY SUGGEST AN EXTRA ONE-PAGE ESSAY OUTLINING YOUR CHARACTERIZATION CHOICES BECAUSE YOU KNOW ASTRAL WOLF WOULD NOT BE A GOOD MATCH FOR CAPTAIN AHAB IN THIS CONTEXT—
TAP TAP TAP
SKRRTCH SKRRT
SHOOT, NOW W-WHERE'D I PUT THAT SAMPLE DIORAMA...


KRIS AND I'LL GO GET IT FOR YOU, MS. ALPHYS!
B-BUT SURE! I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WENT AND GOT THOSE FOR ME.
YEAH, SURE.
AHH, SUSIE, THAT'S VERY GENEROUS OF YOU!
ALTHOUGH YESTERDAY YOU UH... DIDN'T R-REALLY ACTUALLY BRING BACK THOSE BOOKS UNTIL FOUR HOURS LATER...

THIRD DAY IN A ROW YOU WANT TO DO THIS?
DUH! WHY WOULD ANYONE SIT THROUGH ANOTHER BORING LECTURE FROM MS. ALPHYS WHEN THE DARK WORLD'S RIGHT DOWN THE HALL?
WELL...YOU NEVER ASKED IF I DID.
C'MON, KRIS...YOU KNOW I CAN'T GET INTO THAT PLACE WITHOUT YOU.
FOR SOME WEIRD REASON...

AND SERIOUSLY. I KNOW YOU'D RATHER BE THERE THAN IN CLASS.
...YEAH.
DAMN STRAIGHT!

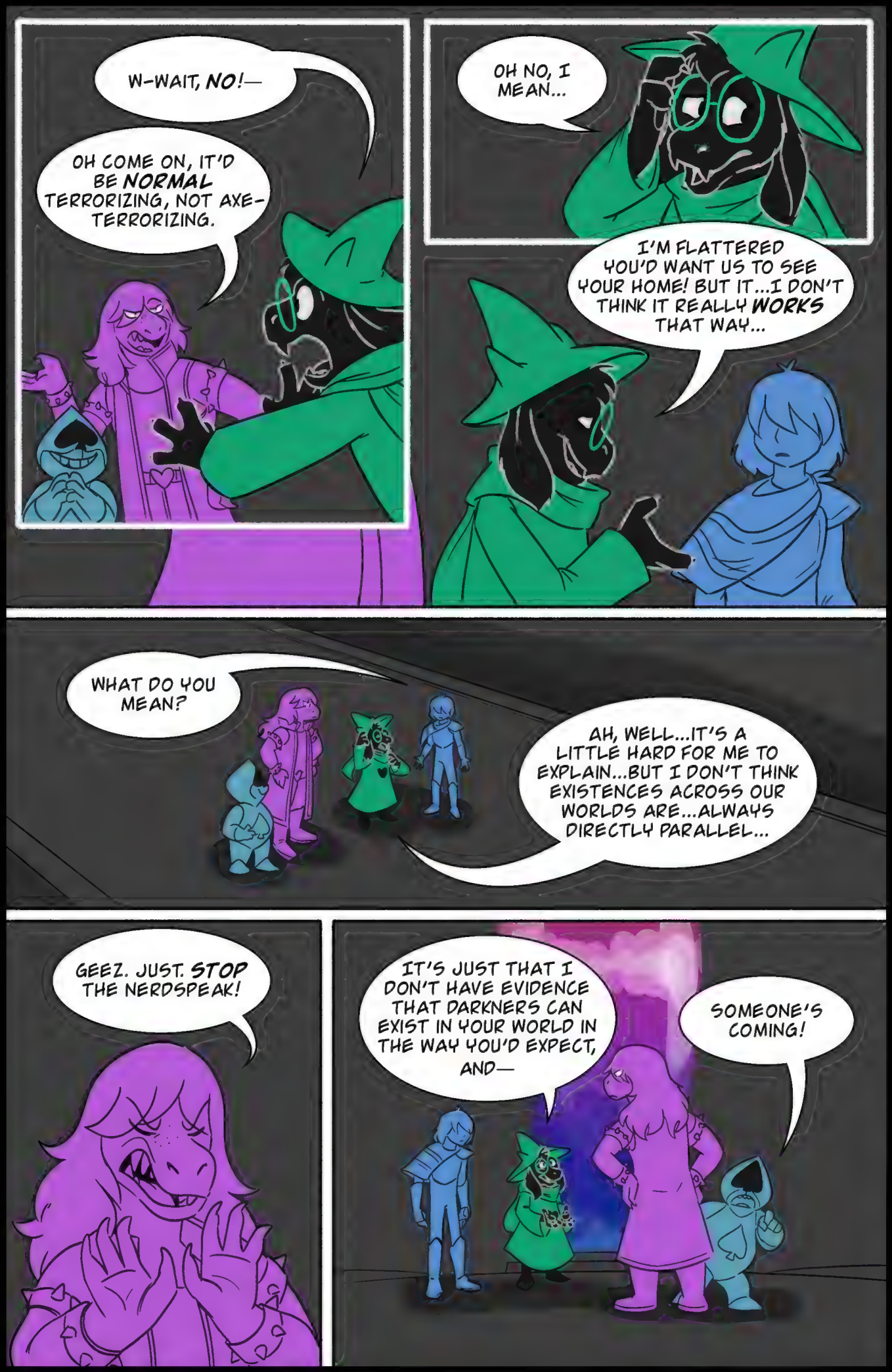

ALL RIGHT!
LET'S GO FIND THOSE LOSERS!

KRIS! SUSIE! I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME BACK AGAIN!
I WOULD'VE MADE YOU ANOTHER WELCOME CAKE, BUT IT'S BEEN SO BUSY AROUND HERE SINCE YOU FIRST ARRIVED...
IT'S LOOKING GOOD, LANCER.
THAT'S 'CAUSE MY KEEN EYE AND OUTSTANDING SENSE OF TASTE ARE TURNING THIS CASTLE FROM AWFUL TO AWFUL-SOME!
THUD!!
SIRE...PLEASE... ARE THESE HOLES NECESSARY TO HAVE IN THIS ROOM?
CAN WE FILL THEM IN?
YOU CAN'T GET RID OF THAT ONE! THAT'S MY THIRD FAVORITE THRONE ROOM HOLE!
...YOU CAN FILL IN ANYTHING BUT MY TOP THREE, THOUGH.

O-OH... WHERE ARE THE OTHER TWO, SIRE?
AROUND. SOMEWHERE.
MAYBE WE SHOULD CHAT SOMEWHERE WHERE IT'S A BIT LESS CROWDED!
YOU'RE STILL NOT BACK IN YOUR OWN CITY YET.
OH NO! NOT MUCH POINT RIGHT NOW.
AND I'VE BEEN HERE TRYING TO STUDY THIS FOUNTAIN, AND HOW WE THREE COULD SEAL IT...BUT I HAVEN'T GOTTEN MANY CLUES SO FAR.

ANCIENT PROPHECIES AREN'T GOOD AT BEING SPECIFIC, HUH?
I THINK THEY TRUST YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT ON YOUR OWN!
WELL, AT LEAST IT'S AN EASY WAY IN AND OUT OF HERE FOR NOW.
YEAH! WOW, IT'S REAL FUNNY HOW MUCH YOU TWO WANTED TO LEAVE HERE THAT FIRST TIME, AND NOW YOU JUST KEEP COMIN' BACK!
'CAUSE IT'S BORING IN OUR WORLD! EVERYONE JUST ACTING LIKE THINGS ARE ALWAYS NICE AND NOTHING'S WRONG.
GETTING YOU... THINKING WEIRD.

OH, IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD! A WHOLE WORLD OF LIGHT...THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT'D BE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO LIVE.
WHAT IF... YOU CAME WITH US TO SEE IT?
OOOH, I WANNA SEE THE LIGHTNER WORLD!
I WANNA TRY LIGHT CANDY! AND USE LIGHT DOLLARS TO BUY LIGHT MP3S!
HAH, THAT'D BE SOMETHING! YOU KNOW JUST HOW MANY STUCK-UP NERDS THERE ARE OUT THERE YOU COULD TERRORIZE?
YEAH!!
IF WE TERRORIZE THEM TOGETHER WE CAN COVER DOUBLE THE NERD GROUND!


W-WAIT, NO!—
OH COME ON, IT'D BE NORMAL TERRORIZING, NOT AXE-TERRORIZING.
OH NO, I MEAN...
I'M FLATTERED YOU'D WANT US TO SEE YOUR HOME! BUT IT...I DON'T THINK IT REALLY WORKS THAT WAY...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AH, WELL...IT'S A LITTLE HARD FOR ME TO EXPLAIN...BUT I DON'T THINK EXISTENCES ACROSS OUR WORLDS ARE...ALWAYS DIRECTLY PARALLEL...
GEEZ. JUST. STOP THE NERDSPEAK!
IT'S JUST THAT I DON'T HAVE EVIDENCE THAT DARKNERS CAN EXIST IN YOUR WORLD IN THE WAY YOU'D EXPECT, AND—
SOMEONE'S COMING!

WHO IS IT?
I...I DON'T KNOW.
HELLO THERE!
I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE...
I-I DON'T LIKE IT...

SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE SCARED OF THIS WEIRDO?
HEY!! YOU!
THIS GUY'S ALREADY PISSING ME OFF.
NO, I DON'T WANNA FIGHT, I JUST WANNA LEAVE!

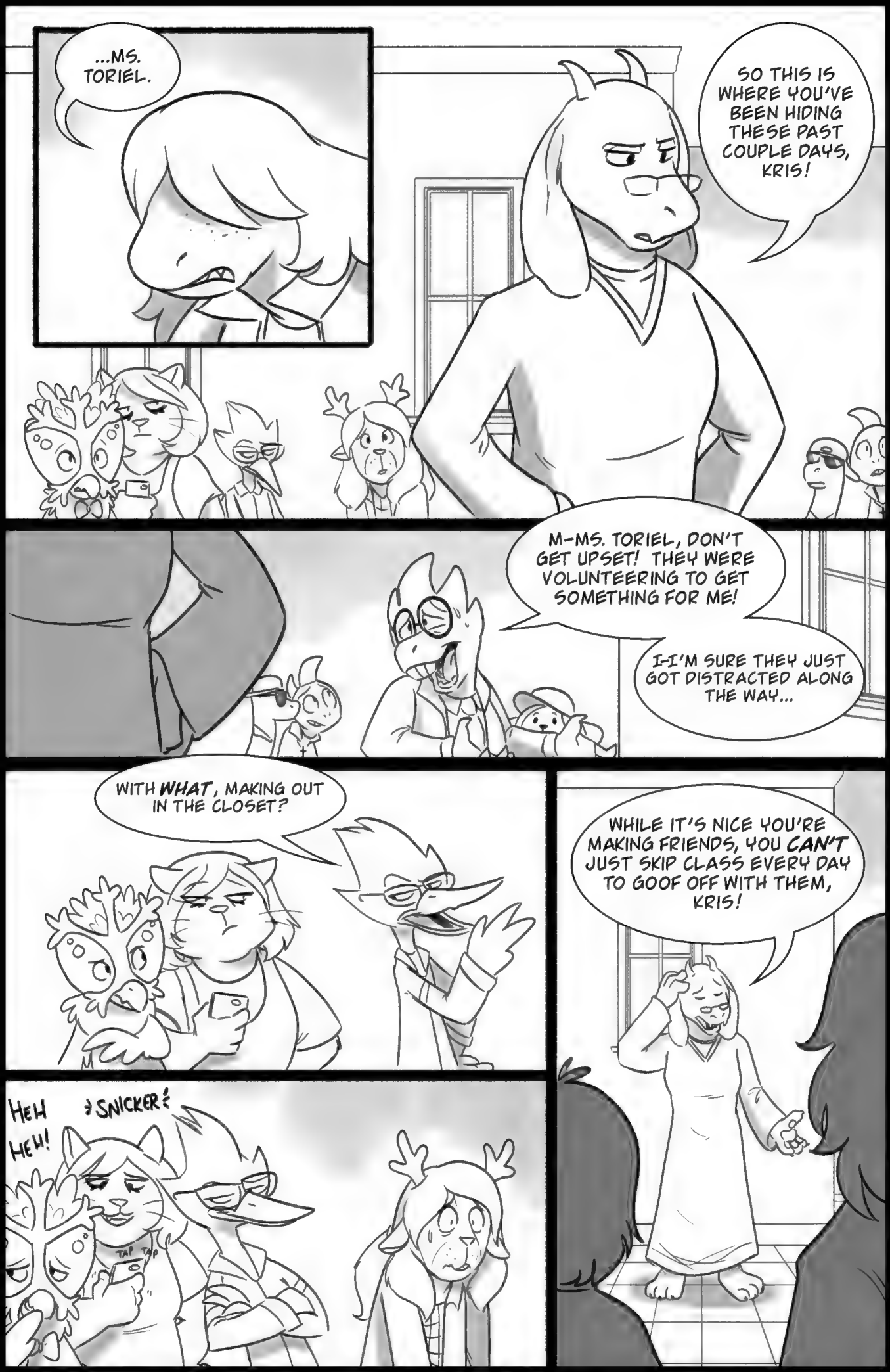
RUN.
WHAT...?
RUN!
TMP
TMP
TMP
KRIS! WAIT!!

NO, KRIS!
I CAN'T
—

CRASH!!!
WHO THE HELL WAS THAT ASSHOLE?!
DAMMIT, LANCER, IF YOU JUST LET—
WH... LANCER?
...NOT THE WAY I EXPECTED, I GUESS.

ICE-E
HEY KID'S! CAN YOU HELP ME SOLVE THIS PUZZLE?
ADNS
ETER
SSCAR
AEKL
KRRA
15
DEAR SECRET DIARY.
ICE-E
WHERE'S...
WHAT'D RALSEI...TURN INTO?

...JUNIOR JUMBLE.
—WE'LL JUST JUMP BACK IN AGAIN SO THEY'LL COME BACK AND—


...MS. TORIEL.
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN HIDING THESE PAST COUPLE DAYS, KRIS!
M-MS. TORIEL, DON'T GET UPSET! THEY WERE VOLUNTEERING TO GET SOMETHING FOR ME!
I-I'M SURE THEY JUST GOT DISTRACTED ALONG THE WAY...
WITH WHAT, MAKING OUT IN THE CLOSET?
WHILE IT'S NICE YOU'RE MAKING FRIENDS, YOU CAN'T JUST SKIP CLASS EVERY DAY TO GOOF OFF WITH THEM, KRIS!
HEH HEH!
SNICKER
TAP TAP
022

THERE'S A TIME AND PLACE FOR THINGS. YOU UNDERSTAND?
...YES.
GOOD. NOW YOU BOTH RUN BACK TO CLASS.
WE'LL DISCUSS THIS MORE AT HOME, KRIS.
DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT SAMPLE DIORAMA! I'M S-SURE YOU ALL KNOW WHAT I MEAN, ANYWAY!
OR CAN JUST LOOK IT UP ONLINE...

DEAR SECRET DIARY,
THIS IS IT. I'M LEAVING FOR COLLEGE TOMORROW. I WAS SO READY TO GET OUT OF HERE, AND NOW... I DON'T KNOW IF I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING OR NOT. I GUESS IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE MY MIND.
MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE... I REALLY HOPE THAT KRIS GETS BETTER SOON. I HOPE WHATEVER'S HAPPENING WILL... NOT, ANYMORE.
I HOPE THEY FIND A FRIEND. I HOPE THEY MAKE LOTS OF GOOD FRIENDS! I HOPE THEY'RE HAPPY. I HOPE THEY'LL BE GOOD TO OTHERS AND THEMSELVES.
MAYBE, BY THE TIME I GET BACK, THEY'LL HAVE ALL THESE FRIENDS THEY CAN INTRODUCE ME TO. MAYBE THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT. THEY'LL BE BETTER. KRIS DESERVES IT.
I THINK THIS IS THE LAST TIME I'LL WRITE ONE OF THESE.
—ASRIEL
024

SCHOOL
OH, GREAT, GUESS YOU DIDN'T SLEEP, EITHER.
IF WE JUST...GO BACK QUICK, AND BRING THEM BACK, IT'LL BE FINE...

WH—WHERE'S THE DARK WORLD?!
WHERE THE HELL IS EVERYTHING?!
GOODNESS, KRIS! I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE YOU HERE THIS EARLY.

BUT IT IS A NICE SURPRISE! GLAD TO SEE YOU ARE FEELING BETTER.
WHAT...HAPPENED...TO THE THINGS IN THIS CLASSROOM?
OH, THAT? WELL...YOUR LITTLE OUTING THERE YESTERDAY REMINDED ME THAT I WAS FAR OVERDUE FOR CLEANING THAT OLD THING OUT...
SO THAT IS WHAT I DID YESTERDAY.
I HOPE YOU BOTH HAVE A GOOD DAY AT SCHOOL!

SHITSHITSHIT DAMMIT DAMMIT DAMMIT!
I CAN'T...I... WE HAVE TO FIX THIS, KRIS!
I CAN'T JUST...LET THIS GO! MY ONLY FRIEND, THIS KID WHO STILL WANTED TO BE FRIENDS AFTER I BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HIM AND NOW I SCREWED HIM UP AND HIS ENTIRE HOME MIGHT BE GONE!!
PLEASE, KRIS, I NEED TO—
YES.
...YES?
YES. WE WILL FIX THIS.
I NEED...TO TALK TO RALSEI.
WELL...HOW THE HELL ARE WE GONNA DO IT?

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, KRIS?
Ms. Toriel
MOM...WHERE DID YOU...THROW OUT THE THINGS IN THE OLD CLASSROOM...
KRIS, WHY IS THIS WORRYING YOU? IT WAS JUST OLD CLASSROOM GAMES, HONEY.
PLEASE...

Mr Toriel
THERE IS NO NEED TO BE UPSET! ALL THOSE THINGS WERE IN GOOD CONDITION AND MOST OF IT WAS LENT FROM OTHER PEOPLE, SO I RETURNED EVERYTHING OR DONATED IT.
WHERE?
WELL...YOU KNOW THAT OLD JIGSAW PUZZLE ACTUALLY BELONGED TO ASRIEL, SO I BROUGHT IT BACK HOME IN CASE HE WAS FEELING NOSTALGIC. I...THINK I LENT THE CHESS SET TO THE HOSPITAL?
IF KNOWING WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER...
I AM AFRAID I DO NOT REMEMBER ALL THE REST. BERDLY HELPED ME WITH THE CLEANUP, HE SHOULD KNOW WHERE THE REST WENT.

NOW DO PLEASE TRY TO RELAX AND FOCUS TODAY, KRIS!
I KNOW YOU WILL DO JUST FINE IF YOU TRY.
THANKS.
WELL, WHAT THE HELL'RE WE DOING?
MAYBE...IF WE FIND EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN THE ROOM AND PUT IT BACK...
—IT'LL BRING THEM BACK, TOO? THAT'S ALL YOU GOT?!

OKAY, OKAY, IT'S SOMETHING WE CAN DO!
SO LET'S GO NOW, FAST!
SCHOOL
AT LEAST THERE'S ONE PLACE WE CAN START.
WHERE?
...MY HOUSE.

WIPE YOUR FEET.
UGH, SERIOUSLY?!
MY MOM WILL NOTICE.
...FINE.

SO THE PUZZLE'S HERE, RIGHT?
NO.
SO IT SHOULD BE IN ONE OTHER PLACE.
GEEZ, KRIS...YOU EVER CONSIDER, LIKE...PUTTING UP A POSTER OR SOMETHIN'...

MOM MAY'VE PUT THE PUZZLE UNDER HIS BED.
SO...ARE YOU EVER GONNA EXPLAIN WHY RALSEI LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE YOUR BROTHER?
WHAT, TOO SECRET FOR ME TO KNOW?
OR DO YOU HAVE NO CLUE, EITHER?

THE PUZZLE SHOULD BE HERE, BUT... I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...
WHAT?
HOW THE HELL IS IT SO DARK HERE—

Chapter Two
Eslira

WH...WE'RE BACK IN THE DARK WORLD!
POP!
SPFFFF
W-WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?!
WOW, THE LIGHTNER WORLD! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

YOU WERE RIGHT, SUSIE, THAT WAS REALLY BORING.
I THINK I SLEPT THROUGH THE WHOLE THING!
YOU GUYS'RE OKAY?!
YEAH, WHY WOULDN'T WE BE?
JUST...UHH...
KRIS, WHAT DID YOU DO?!
AND...WHERE ARE WE?

WHERE IS... EVERYTHING?
LOOK, WE'RE NOT SURE, BUT WE'RE GONNA FIX IT, WE JUST GOTTA...
THE EVERYTHING NEEDS FIXING?!
HEY, GUYS!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ASRIEL?
UHHMMM...
OH MY GOD KRIS, WHY ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT YOUR BROTHER NOW? WE GOT BIGGER CRAP TO DEAL WITH!
LIKE THE WHOLE OLD DARK WORLD BEING GONE?!

EXCUSE ME?!!
GUUUYYYYS!
IT'S IMPORTANT...
YEAH, IT'S LIKE NUMBER EIGHT ON OUR IMPORTANT THINGS LIST RIGHT NOW, OKAY?!
IT'S ALL IMPORTANT...
WE STILL GOT THAT CAPED FREAK TO WORRY ABOUT, AND THE FACT THAT WE HAVE NO CLUE WHERE TO GO BECAUSE THIS IS THE DESERT OF JACK $#!—
UMM, CAN WE BACK UP TO THE PART WHERE OUR HOMES ARE GONE, BECAUSE I WAS UNCONSCIOUS FOR ALL OF THAT, I THINK...

HEY, YOU DUMB CLOWNS!!
I THINK WE SHOULD GO THAT WAY!
.....OH.

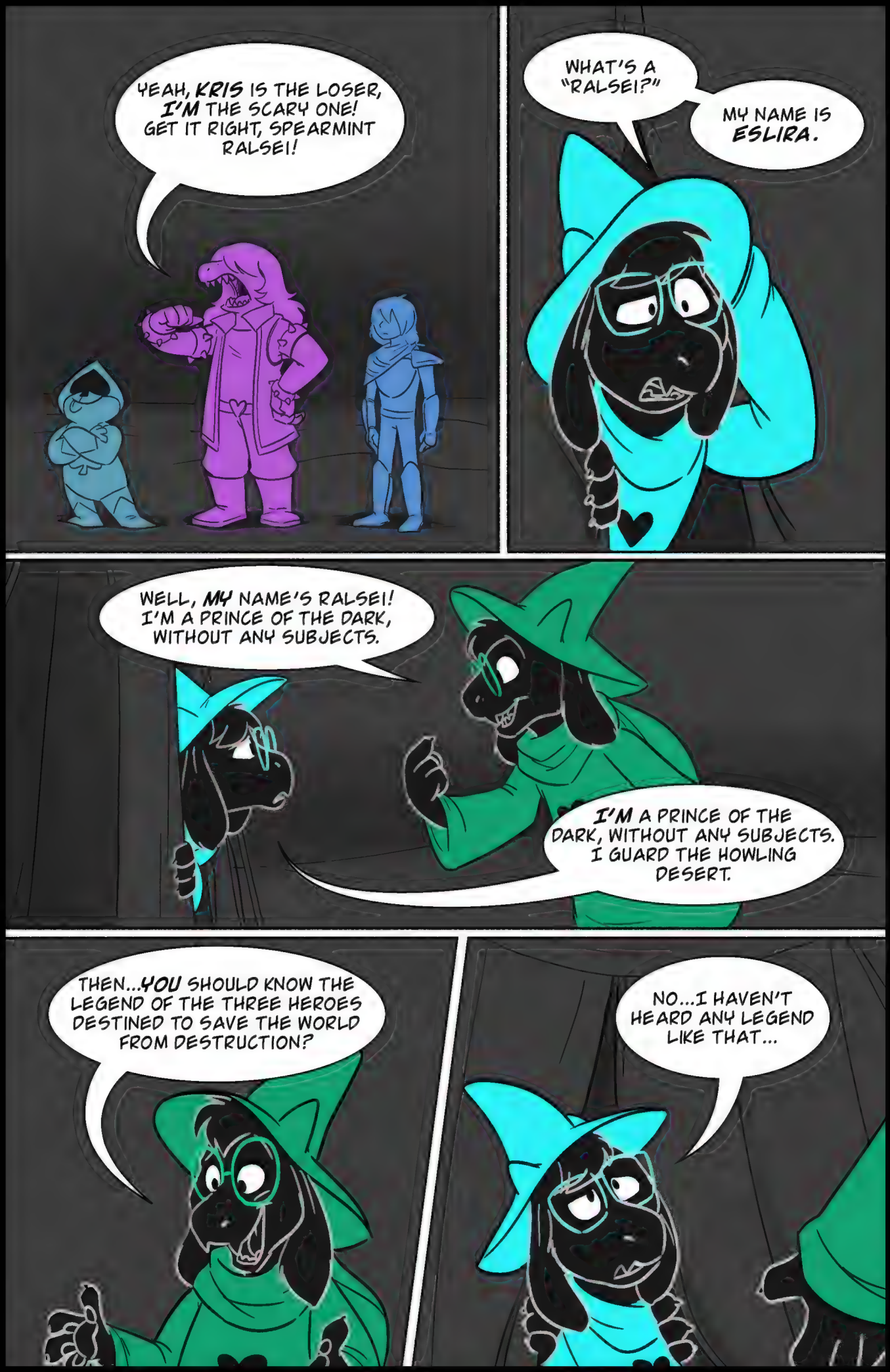
WAIT!
THERE'S ANOTHER FOUNTAIN OF DARKNESS HERE?
HOW CAN THAT BE?!
YOU TELL US, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S SUPPOSED TO KNOW HOW THESE FOUNTAINS WORK!
IT'S JUST...I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS LAND BEFORE.
I THOUGHT WE ONLY HAD TO WORRY ABOUT THE ONE OTHER!

WELL LET'S WORRY ABOUT FIXING YOUR LAND FIRST, *THEN* WE CAN FIGURE OUT THE FOUNTAINS!
IF THERE'S MORE FOUNTAINS WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT...
THIS MIGHT BE MORE CHALLENGING THAN FIRST THOUGHT...
ONCE WE GET TO THAT CITY, WE CAN ASK ABOUT THAT ***AND*** THE JIGSAWRYS.
WE CAN ASK THIS UPCOMING CREEPY LONER PERSON, TOO!

OR THRASH 'EM IF THEY TRY TO MESS WITH US.
HEY, YOU GUYS, LET'S NOT DO ANYTHING RASH!
AFTER ALL, WE'RE STRANGERS TO THIS LAND, AND WE DON'T WANT TO FRIGHTEN WHOEVER LIVES HERE!
SO LET'S JUST WALK OVER AND MAKE A NICE, FRIENDLY FIRST IMPRESSION.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
AAAAAHHH!!
AAAAAAHHH!

AAAAAAHHH!!
AAAAHHHH!!
AAAAAAAAHH!!
AAAAAAAAH!!
OH MY GOD, SHUT UP!!!
GO AWAY! NO ONE'S HOME!!
OH WOW, TWO RALSEIS!
IT'S LIKE NOW WE'VE GOT WINTERGREEN FRESH AND SPEARMINT FLAVORED!
SNORT
HAHA! SO...SORRY TO STARTLE YOU, IT WAS JUST UH, UNEXPECTED!...

NO ONE LIVES HERE! ONLY THE SOUND OF THE WIND! WOOOOOOOO!
I'M HONESTLY SORRY I SCARED YOU! WE'D JUST LIKE TO TALK.
I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU.
I'M SCARED OF THEM.
OF KRIS? DON'T BE SILLY!
KRIS IS ONE OF THE HEROES OF LIGHT, THEY'D NEVER HURT ANYONE!


YEAH, KRIS IS THE LOSER, I'M THE SCARY ONE! GET IT RIGHT, SPEARMINT RALSEI!
WHAT'S A "RALSEI?"
MY NAME IS ESLIRA.
WELL, MY NAME'S RALSEI! I'M A PRINCE OF THE DARK, WITHOUT ANY SUBJECTS.
I'M A PRINCE OF THE DARK, WITHOUT ANY SUBJECTS. I GUARD THE HOWLING DESERT.
THEN...YOU SHOULD KNOW THE LEGEND OF THE THREE HEROES DESTINED TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM DESTRUCTION?
NO...I HAVEN'T HEARD ANY LEGEND LIKE THAT...

LOOK, IT'S NICE YOU LONG-LOST TWINS ARE CATCHING UP, BUT WE'VE GOT CRAP TO DO! ARE YOU GONNA HELP US OR NOT, SPEARMINT?
HELP YOU WITH WHAT?
WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOME MISSING WEIRDOS. SHORT, STUBBY ARMS, WEARING STUPID HATS?
IF ANYONE IS ANYWHERE, THEY'D BE IN TROPHY CITY. NO ONE LIVES IN THE HOWLING DESERT.
WELL, CAN YOU TAKE US THERE?
WITH... THEM?
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT WITH KRIS! THEY'RE VERY KIND AND CAN WIN BATTLES WITHOUT FIGHTING.
IT'S EMBARRASSING, HONESTLY.

IF...IF IT MEANS YOU'LL LEAVE...
YEAH, THAT'S THE IDEA, GET GOING WITH OUR FRIENDS AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE!
U-UM...ALL RIGHT...
OH, I'D LOVE TO TALK MORE! I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT THERE WERE DARK PRINCES BESIDES ME!
ALL RIGHT! SPEARMINT JOINS THE PARTY!
* Spearmint joined the
MY NAME IS ESLIRA. AND I DON'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN BATTLES.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, YOU DON'T NEED TO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE, ANYWAY?
I TOLD YOU...I GUARD THE HOWLING DESERT.
AND TROPHY CITY IS SO...NOISY. MUSICIANS, ATHLETES, FIGHTERS... EVERYONE ALWAYS CHATTERING AND COMPETING.
DOES TROPHY CITY HAVE A KING?
NO...
I CALL DIBS! DIBS ON RULING TROPHY CITY!
LANCER, WE'RE GONNA GET YOU BACK YOUR OWN LAND AND CARD CASTLE.
YEAH, I BELIEVE YOU. I WANT CARD CASTLE AND THIS CITY!
LESSER DAD WOULD BE SO PROUD!...

A POOR IDEA. WHOEVER RUNS TROPHY CITY HAS TO WIN ONE OF THEIR TOURNAMENTS OR COMPETITIONS THEY'RE ALWAYS HAVING.
WHAT SORTS OF COMPETITIONS?
WOW, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT, WE'VE ARRIVED ALREADY!

KRIS, WHAT'S THE PLAN?
WE ASK AROUND, AND FIND ALL THE JIGSAWRYS.
ESLIRA TAKES US TO THE FOUNTAIN.
IF WE BRING EVERYONE BACK WITH US, WE CAN TAKE THEM WHERE WE NEED TO IN THE LIGHTNER WORLD.

AND WE'RE UNCONSCIOUS AGAIN...I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED...
WHAT EXACTLY...DID YOU DO TO YOUR OTHER LAND?...
OKAY, WE'VE GOT A PLAN, LET'S GO!
NEWCOMERS! PREPARE TO BE-BOPPED BACK TO BED!

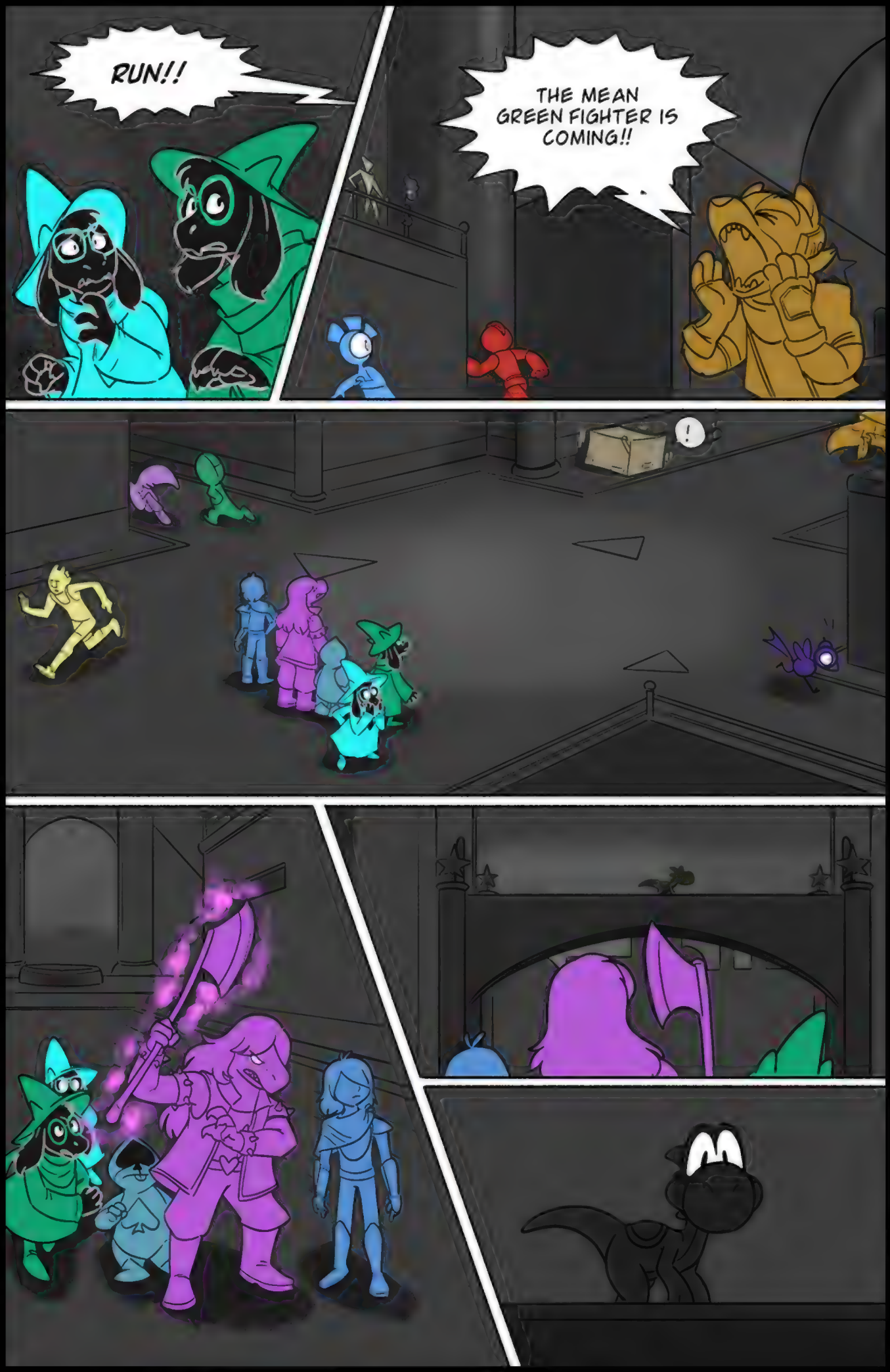
* Jazz Combo appeared!
WAIT...WHY ARE WE BATTLING?
I TOLD YOU, EVERYONE IN TROPHY CITY WANTS TO COMPETE!

Check
Air Guitar
Chill
Full Concert

PERFECT PERFORMANCE!
INCREDIBLE INSTRUMENTATION!
WE MUST PRACTICE EVEN HARDER TO BE-REACH THE FINALS FOR MAYOR!
MUSICAL... MAYOR RACE...?!
WAIT! BEFORE YOU GO...WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOME MISSING FRIENDS OF OURS.
THEY'RE SHORT, AND HAVE SNAPPY HATS...HAVE YOU SEEN THEM?

NOPE, NOT A NOTE...
FEW FINE FOLKS FROLICKING OUT THESE FRIDAYS...
...SINCE THE MEAN GREEN MACHINE STOPPED BEIN' PEACHY-KEEN!
STEER CLEAR OF THAT FIGHTER OF FEAR WHILE HERE!
HEY QUICK QUESTION, THE HELL DOES ANY OF THAT MEAN?!

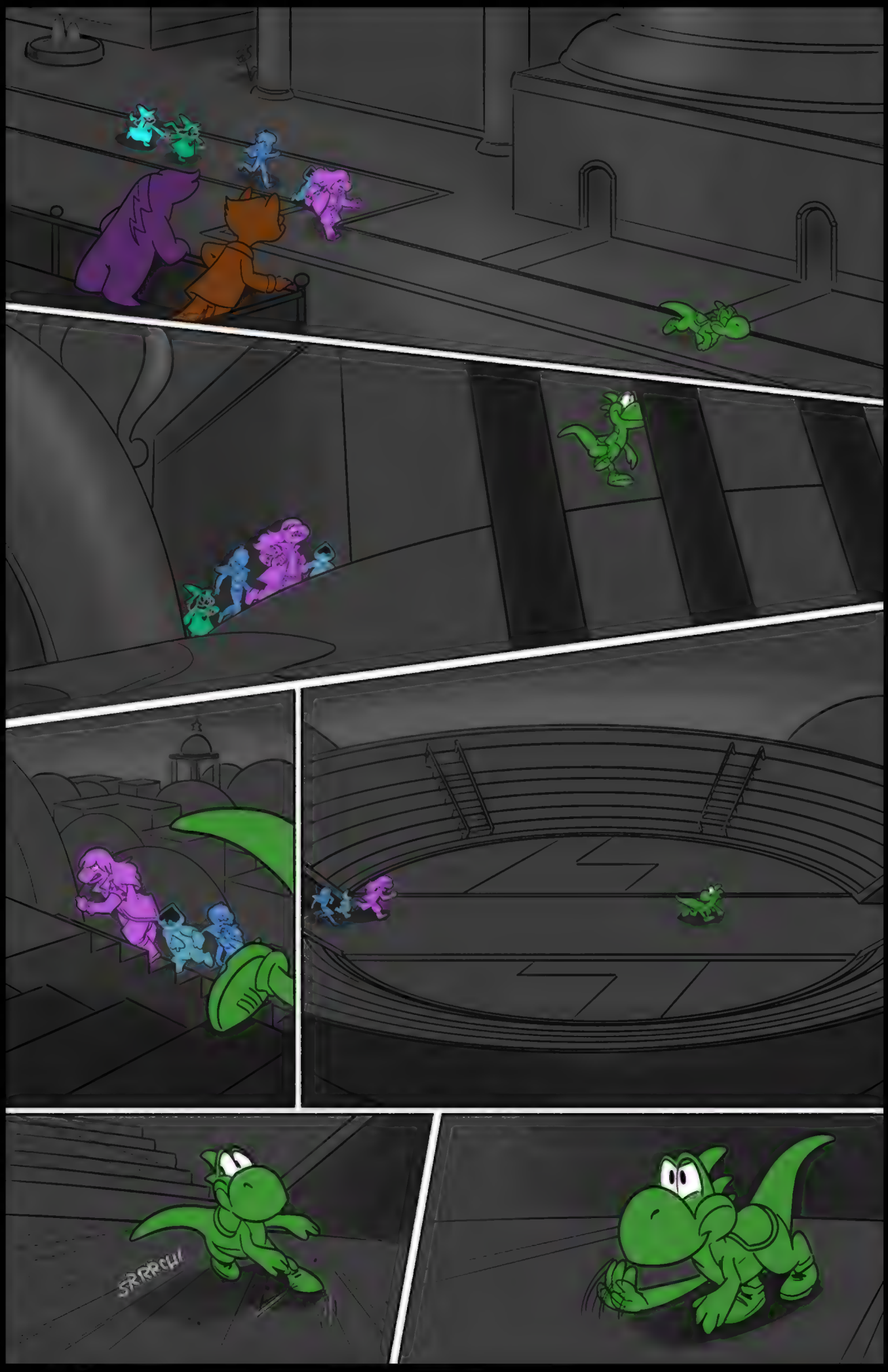
SEE, ESLIRA? KRIS CHOOSES TO END BATTLES PEACEFULLY! YOU CAN TRUST THEM.
WHY IS ALL OF YOUR HEALTH TIED TO THEIR SOUL?
WELL THAT'S...JUST HOW IT IS. THE FOUNTAINS RESONATE WITH THEIR SOUL.
SO WE ONLY SURVIVE BATTLE IF THEY DO.
AND THAT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU?
I MEAN...I TRUST KRIS TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION...


RUN!!
THE MEAN GREEN FIGHTER IS COMING!!
!

...WAIT. ISN'T THAT JUST YISHO FROM THAT KIDDIE GAME 'YISHO'S STORY?'
I THINK IT'D BE SUPER SMASHING FIGHTERS, ACTUALLY.
WHATEVER!
OH, HE LOOKS VERY FRIENDLY! I'M SURE THE CITIZENS HERE MUST BE MISTAKEN!
TMP TMP TMP
SIRE! SIRE, YOU GOT OUTTA THE GREAT CALAMITY!
WE'VE BEEN SCATTERED ALL OVER AND FORCED TO PARTICIPATE IN DANCE-OFFS TO MAKE ENDS MEET!!
062

DON'T WORRY! YOUR RULER AND HIS LIGHTNER FRIENDS OF THE LANCER FAN CLUB ARE HERE TO SAVE YOU!
!!
AAAAAAAAhhhhhh!
GULP!
...WELL MAYBE NOT HIM SPECIFICALLY.

OH, I KNEW THIS WOULD GO BAD!
GET BACK HERE YOU STUPID FROG!!
THAT'S MY TUTORIAL MASTER YOU ATE!


SRRRCH!

* Ready? GO!
BLMM!
Check
Talk
Sing
Call the IRS
OKAY, KRIS! I KNOW YOU'LL KNOW HOW TO PEACEFULLY SOLVE THIS!
?
??
KRIS, THE HELL'RE YOU DOING?! OUR CELL PHONES DON'T EVEN WORK IN THE DARK WORLD!

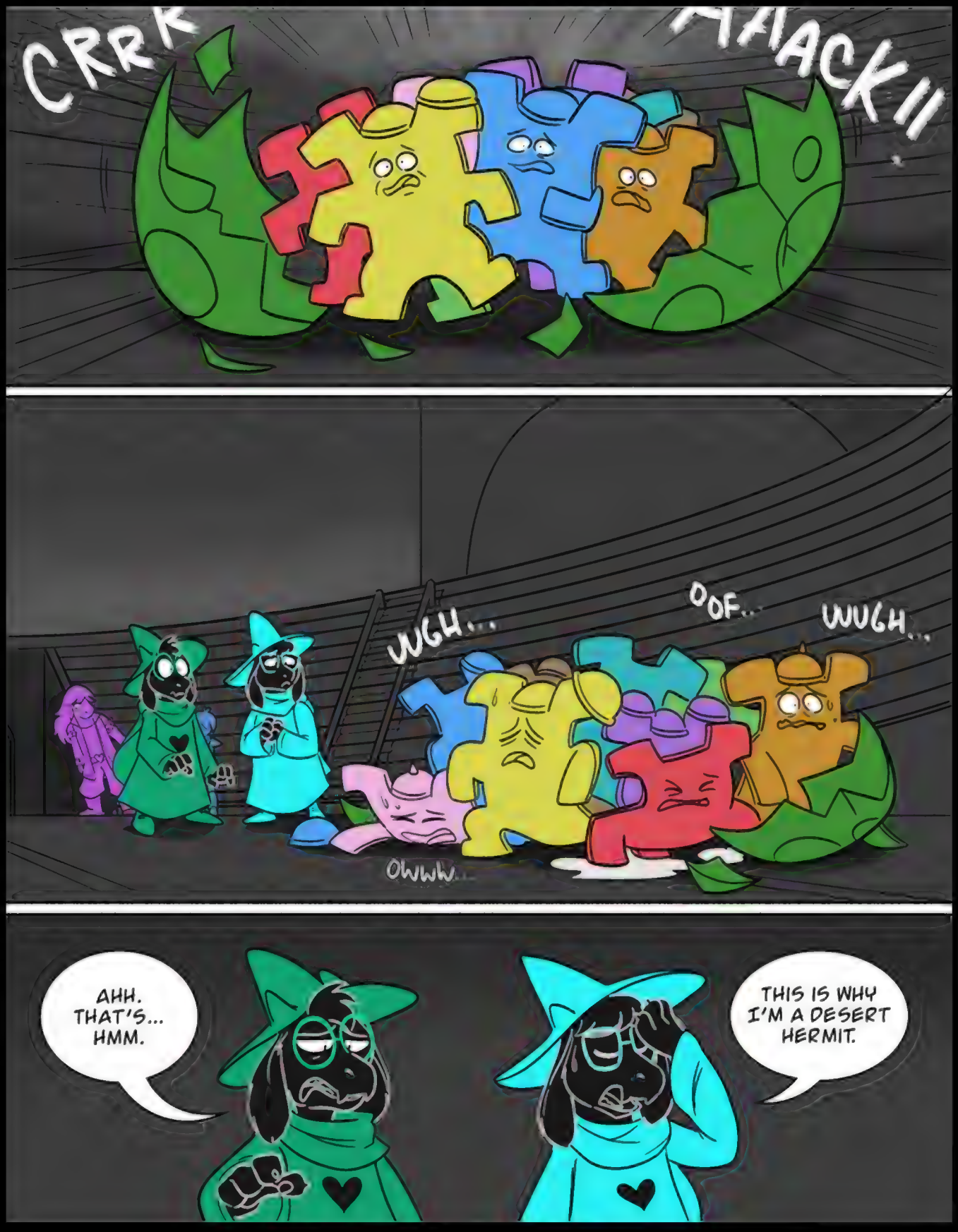
RRGH!
29
25
UGH!
26
Talk
Call the IRS
I'D RATHER WE NOT LEAVE YOU DINO-SORE!
???

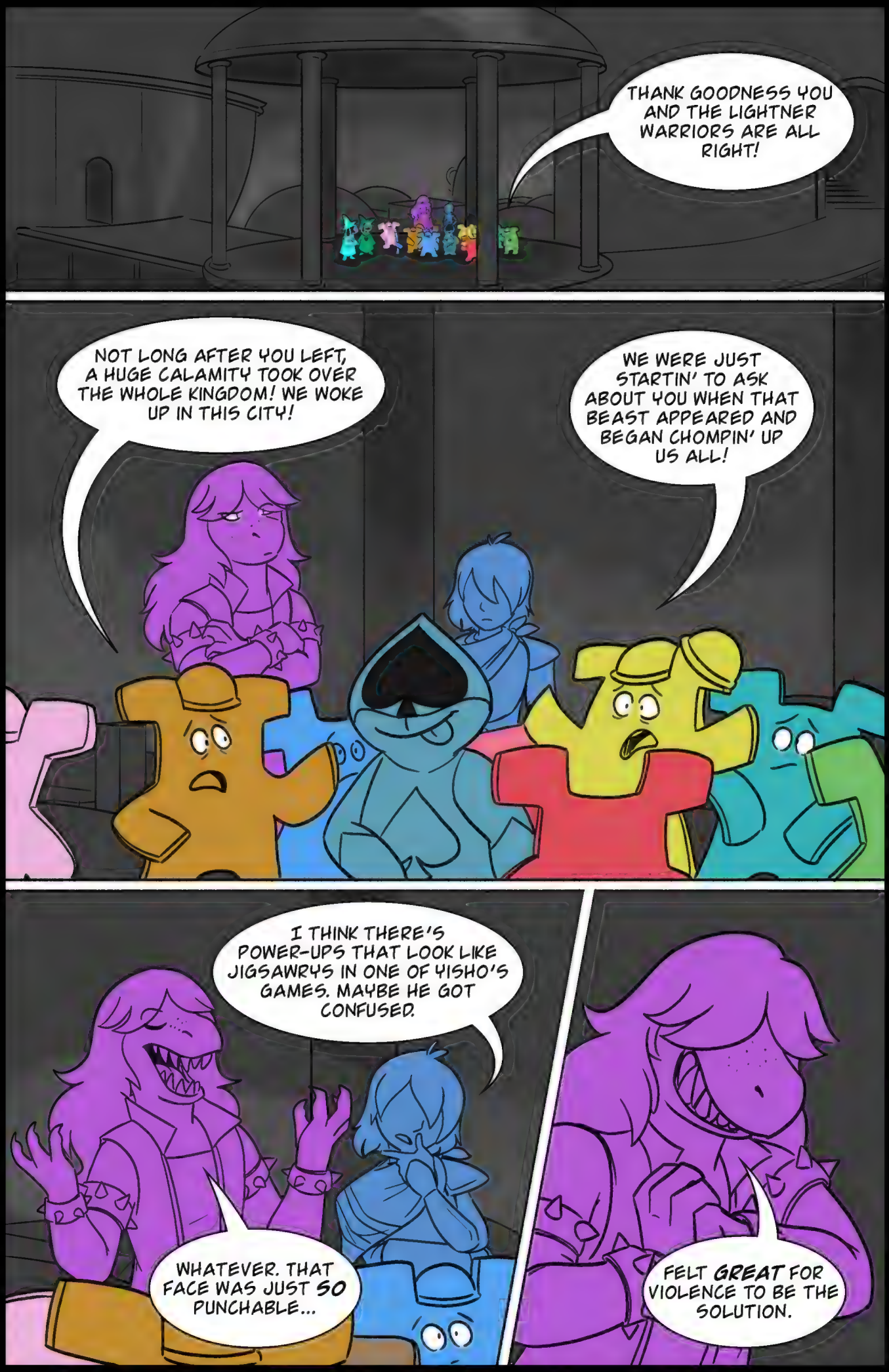
POP!!
NOTHING SEEMS TO BE CALMING HIM... RALSEI, TRY TO SING!

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?!
NNGH!
29
32
30
OKAY, WE'RE DONE HERE.
TMP TMP TMP

AAGOH!
CONK!
Pop!
Hah Hah Hah
* GAME!

...A VIOLENT OPTION WAS WHAT WORKED?
IF HE'S REALLY FROM SUPER SMASHING FIGHTERS, THEN YEAH, VIOLENCE WOULD BE THE SOLUTION!
LOOKS MORE LIKE YOU JUST FIXED HIS CONSTIPATION!
...WAY TO COMPLETELY RUIN MY WIN, LANCER.
WOW, DID HE LEAVE US A CUTE BABY LIZARD?
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK


CRRK
ATTACK!!
UUGH...
OOF...
UUUGH...
OWWW...
AHH. THAT'S... HMM.
THIS IS WHY I'M A DESERT HERMIT.


THANK GOODNESS YOU AND THE LIGHTNER WARRIORS ARE ALL RIGHT!
NOT LONG AFTER YOU LEFT, A HUGE CALAMITY TOOK OVER THE WHOLE KINGDOM! WE WOKE UP IN THIS CITY!
WE WERE JUST STARTIN' TO ASK ABOUT YOU WHEN THAT BEAST APPEARED AND BEGAN CHOMPIN' UP US ALL!
I THINK THERE'S POWER-UPS THAT LOOK LIKE JIGSAWRYS IN ONE OF YISHO'S GAMES. MAYBE HE GOT CONFUSED.
WHATEVER. THAT FACE WAS JUST SO PUNCHABLE...
FELT GREAT FOR VIOLENCE TO BE THE SOLUTION.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN WITH US NOW?
THE LIGHTNERS ARE GONNA HELP RESTORE OUR LAND! BUT I GUESS WE GOTTA TAKE A NAP THROUGH MOST OF IT.
...GUESS THAT AIN'T THE WORST THING.
OKAY, I KNOW THAT LAST BATTLE WAS A LITTLE ROUGH...BUT BELIEVE ME, KRIS IS REALLY GOOD ABOUT BEING PEACEFUL!
I BELIEVE YOU.
THEN...WHAT ARE YOU SO WORRIED ABOUT?
THE LEGEND I HEARD WHISPERED IN SHADOWS, AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER...
WAS OF A HUMAN LIGHTNER THAT CAME OUT OF THE HOWLING DESERT, TORMENTED BY UNKNOWN FORCES IN THE WORLD OF LIGHT.
UNABLE TO ESCAPE THIS MADNESS, THEY SPREAD DARKNESS AND CHAOS WHEREVER THEY WENT.

THAT HUMAN, KRIS...THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I IMAGINED. MAYBE THEY WON'T BE AS BAD AS I FEARED. MAYBE...THE DARKNESS CAN BE KEPT IN BALANCE.
BUT...YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL. IF I DON'T HAVE THE WHOLE PICTURE...THEN I DOUBT YOU DO, TOO.
MAYBE. BUT I STILL TRUST KRIS!
I MEAN...I *HAVE* TO.
HEY SPEARMINT, THIS PLACE HAS BEEN A RIOT AND ALL, BUT WE GOT TONS MORE TO DO, SO WHICH WAY OUTTA HERE?
IT'S *ESLIRA*...AND THE FOUNTAIN ISN'T FAR.

DO YOU KNOW WHEN THIS FOUNTAIN APPEARED?
I'M NOT SURE. I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN WHERE IT IS, BUT NEVER HOW IT GOT THERE.
AND NO RULERS TO WATCH IT? THAT'S DUMB.
LIKE I SAID, THE RULERS HERE CHANGE DEPENDING ON WHO WINS TOURNAMENTS...
THE LAST I HEARD, THINGS WERE IN GREAT DISARRAY AFTER A STRANGE KNIGHT WON THE LAST TOURNAMENT, AND THEN REFUSED RULE...AND THEN THAT WHOLE MESS WITH THE GREEN FIGHTER...

THAT CAPED FREAK AGAIN...
YOU NEVER ANSWERED MY QUESTION.
KRIS, JUST... THAT'S NOT SOMETHING I HAVE GOOD ANSWERS FOR, EITHER.
MAYBE AFTER OUR LAND IS FIXED, I'LL EXPLAIN WHAT I CAN, OKAY?
FINE.

WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO, BOSS?
JUST HANG ON, IT'S GONNA GET WEEEEIRD!
...SORRY ABOUT THIS, LANCER.
IT'S OKAY, I KNOW YOU CLOWNS WILL FIX IT!
...THANKS.

THUNK!!

NNGH...
HEY, THAT DID IT!
500
WELL, THAT SCHOOL DAY'S SHOT.
BUT WHO CARES, WE FOUND SOME OF THE MISSING PIECES!
THERE'S A LOT MORE OF THE DARK WORLD THAN WE THOUGHT.
YEAH.
UGH, I'M GONNA GO RAID YOUR FRIDGE, I'M STARVING.

WHY DOES DARK WORLD FOOD NEVER SEEM TO COUNT...

HEY, KRIS!
YOU GOT ANY LEFTOVER FRIED CHICKEN OR SOMETHING?!
SECRET DIARY,
THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY WRONG WITH KRIS.
THEY KEEP WAKING ME UP AT NIGHT, SOMETIMES THEY'RE MOANING, OR SCREAMING. SOMETIMES THERE'S SOMETHING LIKE SCRAPPING METAL IN THE DARK. ONE TIME I FELT THEM GRAB ME REALLY TIGHT AND MUMBLE SOMETHING AT ME AND I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS BUT I WAS TOO SCARED TO TURN AND LOOK AT THEM.
I TOLD MOM, BUT SHE JUST SAID I NEED TO BE THE BIGGER BROTHER AND COMFORT THEM IF THEY HAVE NIGHTMARES. I DON'T THINK THESE ARE NIGHTMARES.
BUT IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN TOMORROW NIGHT I'M GOING TO TRY SINGING A LULLABY. MAYBE IT'LL CALM THEM DOWN. I HOPE.
ASRIEL

Chapter Three

Aelsir

KNOCK KNOCK
KRIS, IT IS TIME TO GET UP...
LEFT EARLY AGAIN?
HOW UNUSUAL...
SO WE GOTTA FIND THE REST OF WHO'S MISSING...
BERDLY MAY KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.
UUGH. THEN WE THREATEN IT OUT OF HIS ROYAL NERDLINESS FIRST.
ASK.
WHATEVER!
SCHOOL

SCHOOL
OH, KRIS, SUSIE!
I WAS REALLY WORRIED, YESTERDAY YOU—
HEY, NERD!

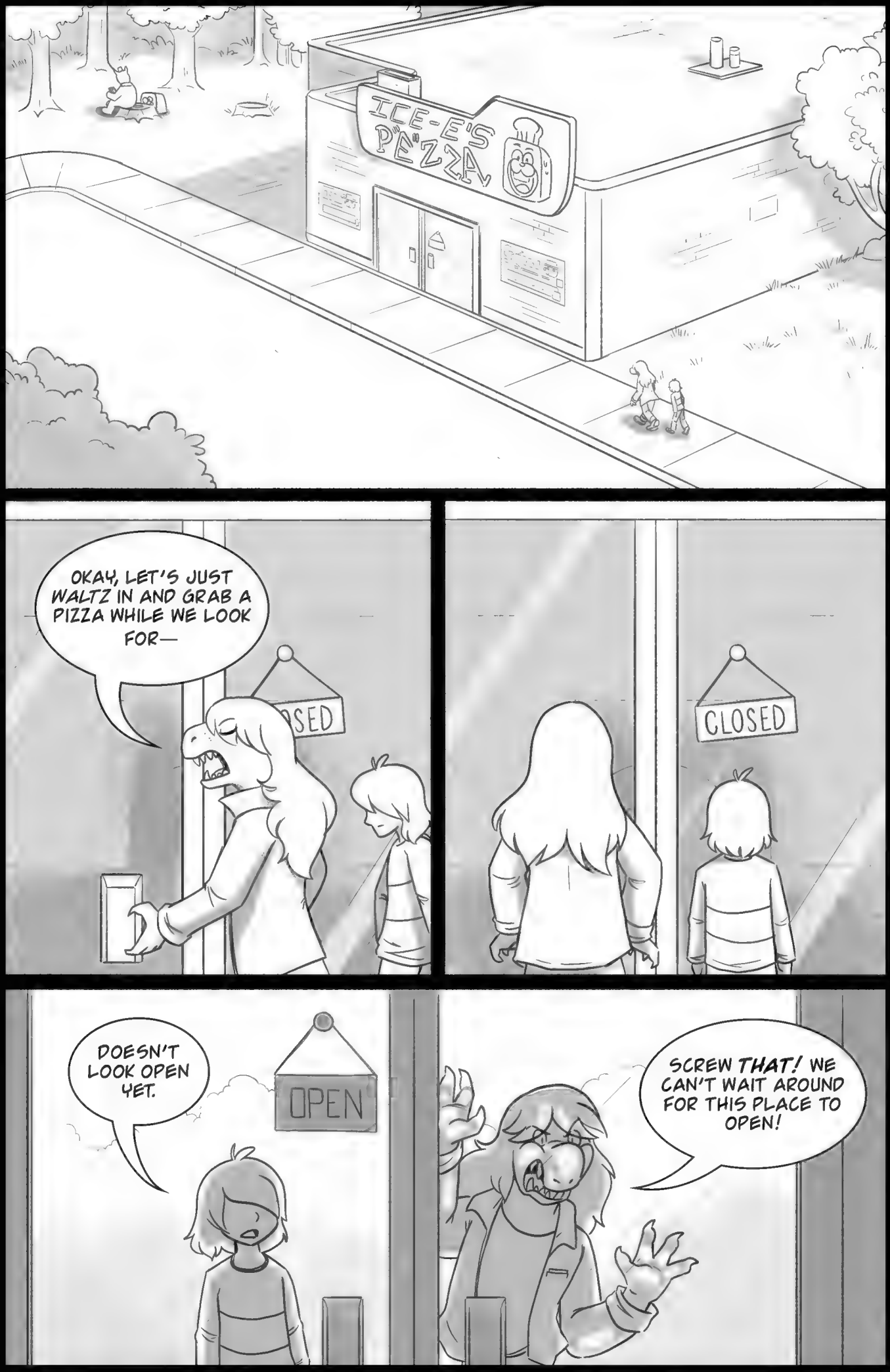
SCHOOL
FUNNY YOU SAYING ME BEING SMART LIKE IT'S AN INSULT, CONSIDERING YOU BOTH WERE GONE AGAIN ALL DAY YESTERDAY—
YOU HELPED. MS. TORIEL CLEAN OUT THAT OLD CLASSROOM. WHERE'D YOU PUT EVERYTHING?
THAT'S NOT REALLY YOUR BUSINESS...
IT IS, ACTUALLY.
FIGURED YOU'D KNOW THAT IF YOU WERE SO SMART.
YEEEEAH, CAN'T SAY I'M CONVINCED.

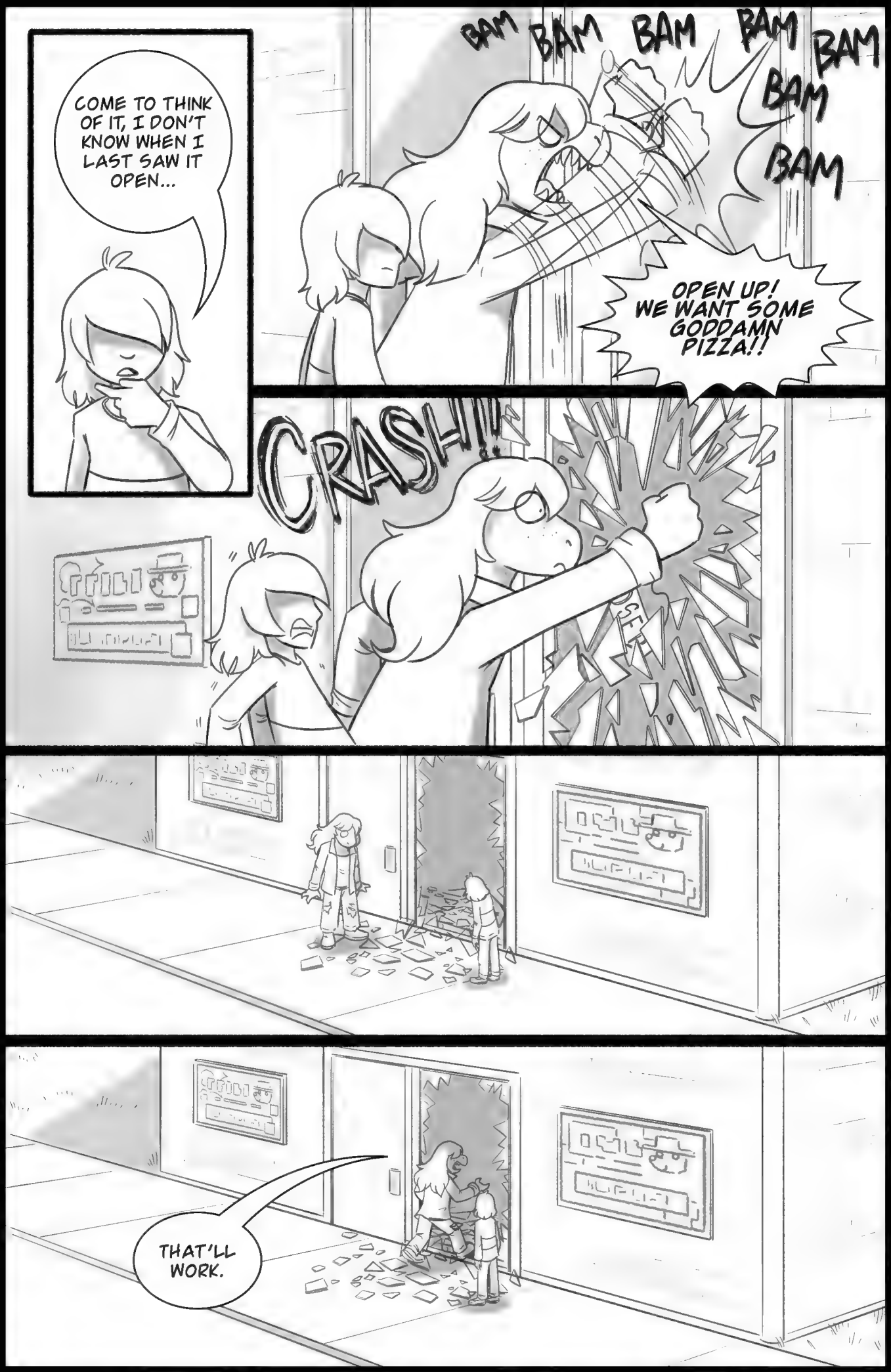
OH, YOU DON'T WANT ME TO CONVINCE YOU, NERD.
I-I HAD TO DO A BUNCH OF RESEARCH FOR THIS, YOU KNOW!
SCHOOL
THE CHESS SET GOT LOANED TO THE HOSPITAL. THAT RATTY OLD CAT STUFFY CAME FROM ICE-E'S PIZZERIA.
THE BUILD-A-BLOX SET WAS LOANED FROM THE CHURCH COLLECTION. AND THAT CARD PACK ORIGINALLY BELONGED TO THE HOLIDAYS...
SCHOOL
ALTHOUGH WEIRDLY, THE JOKER AND THIS CARD WERE MISSING...

YOU TOUCH ME AGAIN AND I'LL BITE YOUR HANDS OFF, YOU LITTLE TURDSTICK!!!
SCHOOL
DUDE...NOT RADICAL.

UH-
UM...
WHY DO YOU DO THAT?
WHAT?
ACT THAT WAY.
WHAT, NOW YOU'VE SUDDENLY GOT A PROBLEM WITH MY ATTITUDE?!
JUST CURIOUS.

IT'S BETTER IF THEY JUST STAY AWAY FROM ME. I KNOW THEY'RE JUDGING ME ALL THE TIME.
THEY ONLY RESPECT ME WHEN THEY'RE SCARED OF ME.
I MEAN, COME ON, YOU'RE A FREAK. I KNOW THEY'RE ALL JUST BEING PITY-NICE.
IT SUCKS, DOESN'T IT? YOU SHOULD TRY BEING SCARY.
NO.
I SHOULDN'T.


ICE-E'S PIZZA
OKAY, LET'S JUST WALTZ IN AND GRAB A PIZZA WHILE WE LOOK FOR—
CLOSED
DOESN'T LOOK OPEN YET.
OPEN
SCREW THAT! WE CAN'T WAIT AROUND FOR THIS PLACE TO OPEN!

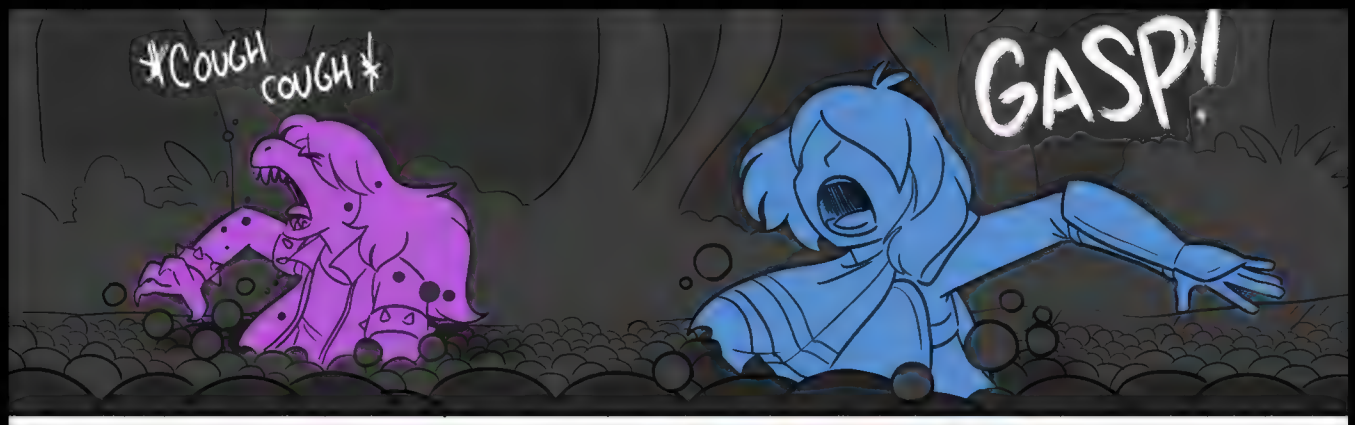

COME TO THINK OF IT, I DON'T KNOW WHEN I LAST SAW IT OPEN...
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM
OPEN UP! WE WANT SOME GODDAMN PIZZA!!
CRASH!!!
THAT'LL WORK.

GEEZ, WHEN'S THE LAST TIME ANYONE EVEN HAD A BIRTHDAY HERE?
WELL, THEY SAY THAT ONCE, A KID GOT KILLED HERE...AND THEY NEVER FOUND THE BODY...
BUT SOMETIMES YOU CAN HEAR KIDS' LAUGHTER COMING FROM THE ICE-E ANIMATRONIC...
YOU SURE THAT ISN'T JUST A DUMB STORY YOU GOT OFF THE INTERNET?

I DON'T THINK IT'S IN THERE.
IT MIGHT AS WELL BE, IT'S NOT IN ANY OF THE RIGHT PLACES THEY PUT TOYS!
SERIOUSLY? AGAIN?!

UUGH...
TAP TAP
HELLO? POLI—
WHO'S READY TO GET ARRESTED?!!
AAAAGGH!!
FWIP

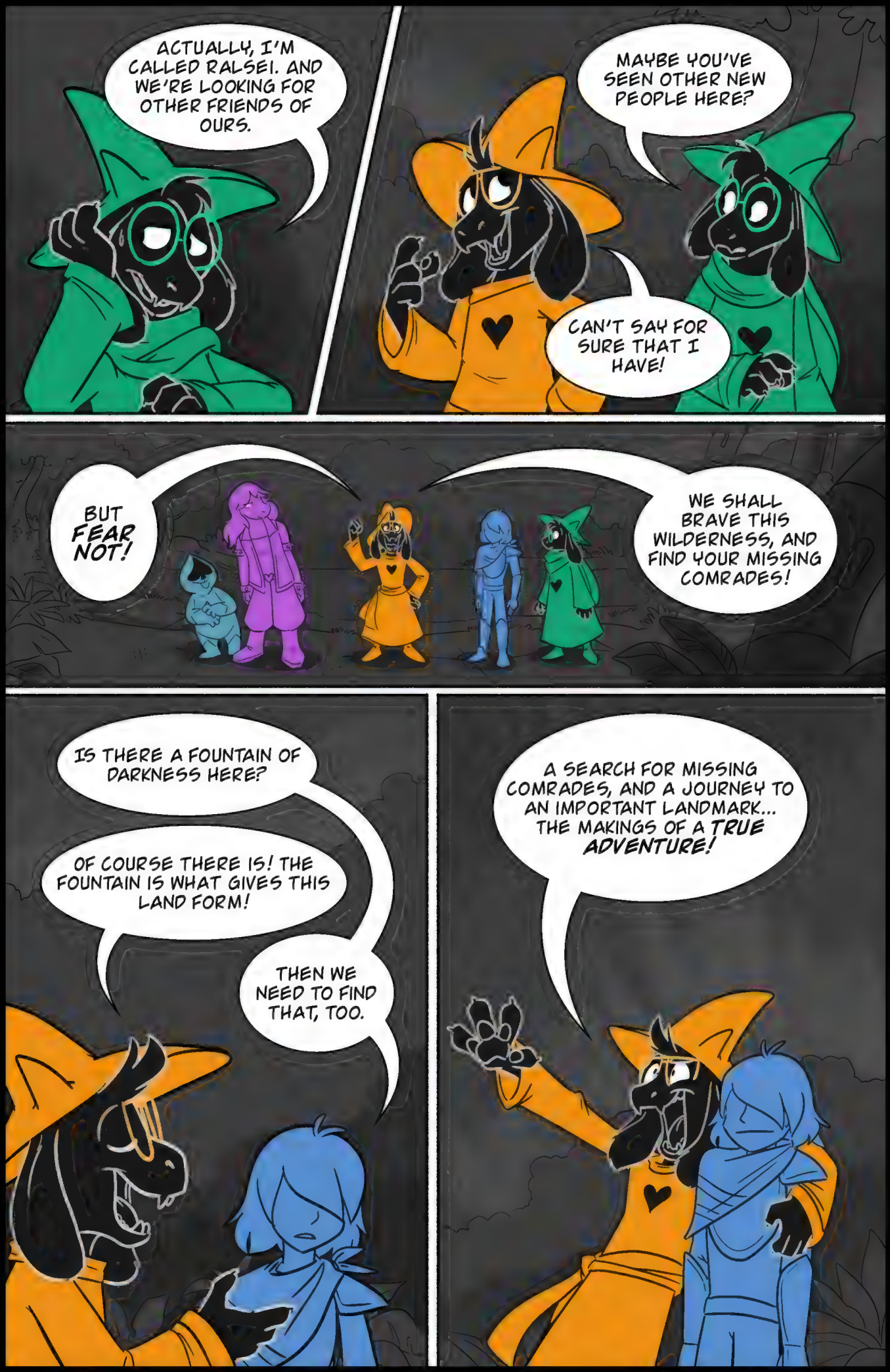
CLICK!
HEY!! I KNOW YOU PUNKS ARE IN HERE SOMEWHERE!


COUGH COUGH
GASP!

GEEZ, ANOTHER PORTAL INTO THE DARK WORLD?!
GASP COUGH
POP!
POP!
BRBRLL BLRBBRL
WHERE HAVE YOU BROUGHT US NOW?
WE WERE STILL TRYING TO FIND ALL THE PIECES OF YOUR KINGDOM WHEN WE FOUND OURSELVES HERE.
THIS IS THE COOOOLEST LAKE I'VE EVER BEEN IN!
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SWIM!

UGH, C'MON, LET'S GET OUT OF THIS MESS!
WHAT HO, BRAVE ADVENTURERS! WELCOME TO THIS WILD LAND!
I AM AELSIR, DARK PRINCE OF THE RAINBOW JUNGLE!
A PRINCE WITHOUT SUBJECTS, BUT NOT WITHOUT AMBITIONS!

YOU SERIOUS? ANOTHER ONE?
ARE WE JUST GONNA COLLECT THE WHOLE DAMN SET?!
OH WOW, PUMPKIN SPICE IS MY FAVORITE TOOTHPASTE FLAVOR!
TMP!
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR LIKES IN THIS LAND BEFORE!
EXCEPT FOR YOU, GREEN-ME!

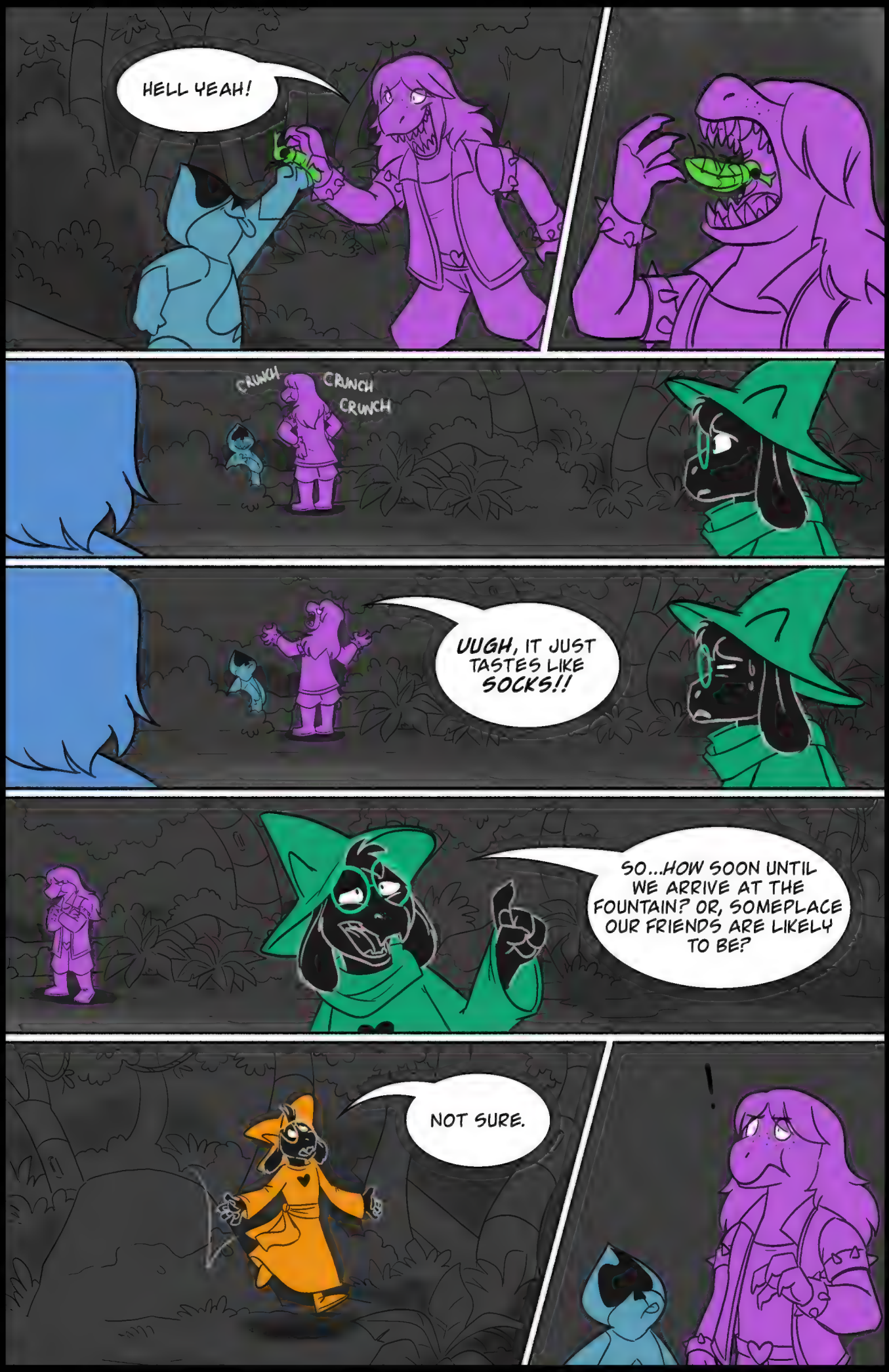

ACTUALLY, I'M CALLED RALSEI. AND WE'RE LOOKING FOR OTHER FRIENDS OF OURS.
MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN OTHER NEW PEOPLE HERE?
CAN'T SAY FOR SURE THAT I HAVE!
BUT FEAR NOT!
WE SHALL BRAVE THIS WILDERNESS, AND FIND YOUR MISSING COMRADES!
IS THERE A FOUNTAIN OF DARKNESS HERE?
OF COURSE THERE IS! THE FOUNTAIN IS WHAT GIVES THIS LAND FORM!
THEN WE NEED TO FIND THAT, TOO.
A SEARCH FOR MISSING COMRADES, AND A JOURNEY TO AN IMPORTANT LANDMARK... THE MAKINGS OF A TRUE ADVENTURE!

I'M SO GLAD YOU DON'T HAVE AN ISSUE WITH US BEING HERE... ESPECIALLY KRIS!
OF COURSE NOT! THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY ONE OF THE HEROES OF LIGHT, DESTINED TO DISCOVER NEW PLACES AND NEW PEOPLE!
YES! AND TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM DESTRUCTION!
JUST LOOK AT HOW GOOD-LOOKING THEY ARE!
AND SMART, TOO!
I WAS GOING TO ADD WITTY AND INSIGHTFUL!
THIS IS SO UNCOMFORTABLE.

* Smells like socks.
RROAR!
*Also smells like socks.

* Still smells like socks.
OKAY, KRIS, WE GET IT! STOP CHECKING!!
* Amazingly...it smells like socks.
LET'S STOP AND REST HERE FOR A BIT.

GOODNESS, THIS IS CERTAINLY AN EXPANSIVE PLACE.
INDEED! A PERSON COULD SPEND WEEKS EXPLORING THIS WILDERNESS!
WEEKS?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
HEY, SUSIE, LOOK! I FOUND A WEIRD BUG!
YOU WANNA EAT IT?


HELL YEAH!
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
UUGH, IT JUST TASTES LIKE SOCKS!!
SO...HOW SOON UNTIL WE ARRIVE AT THE FOUNTAIN? OR, SOMEPLACE OUR FRIENDS ARE LIKELY TO BE?
NOT SURE.
!

WAIT, YOU'RE NOT SURE?!
HAVEN'T YOU BEEN TO THE FOUNTAIN BEFORE?
OH, NO...I THINK IT'S OVER ON CLAW MOUNTAIN, BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE MYSELF.
JUST BEEN TOO BUSY MAPPING OUT THIS JUNGLE!
THEN WE NEED TO GO THAT WAY AND NOT JUST WANDER IN CIRCLES!
WHY? ARE... YOU ALL NOT HAVING FUN?
I MEAN, IT HAS BEEN FUN, BUT—
NOT THE SOCKS PART!!
BUT WE'VE GOT A GOAL TO ACCOMPLISH.
AT LEAST...THE LIGHTNERS HERE HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO OUT IN THEIR WORLD. WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO JUST EXPLORE.

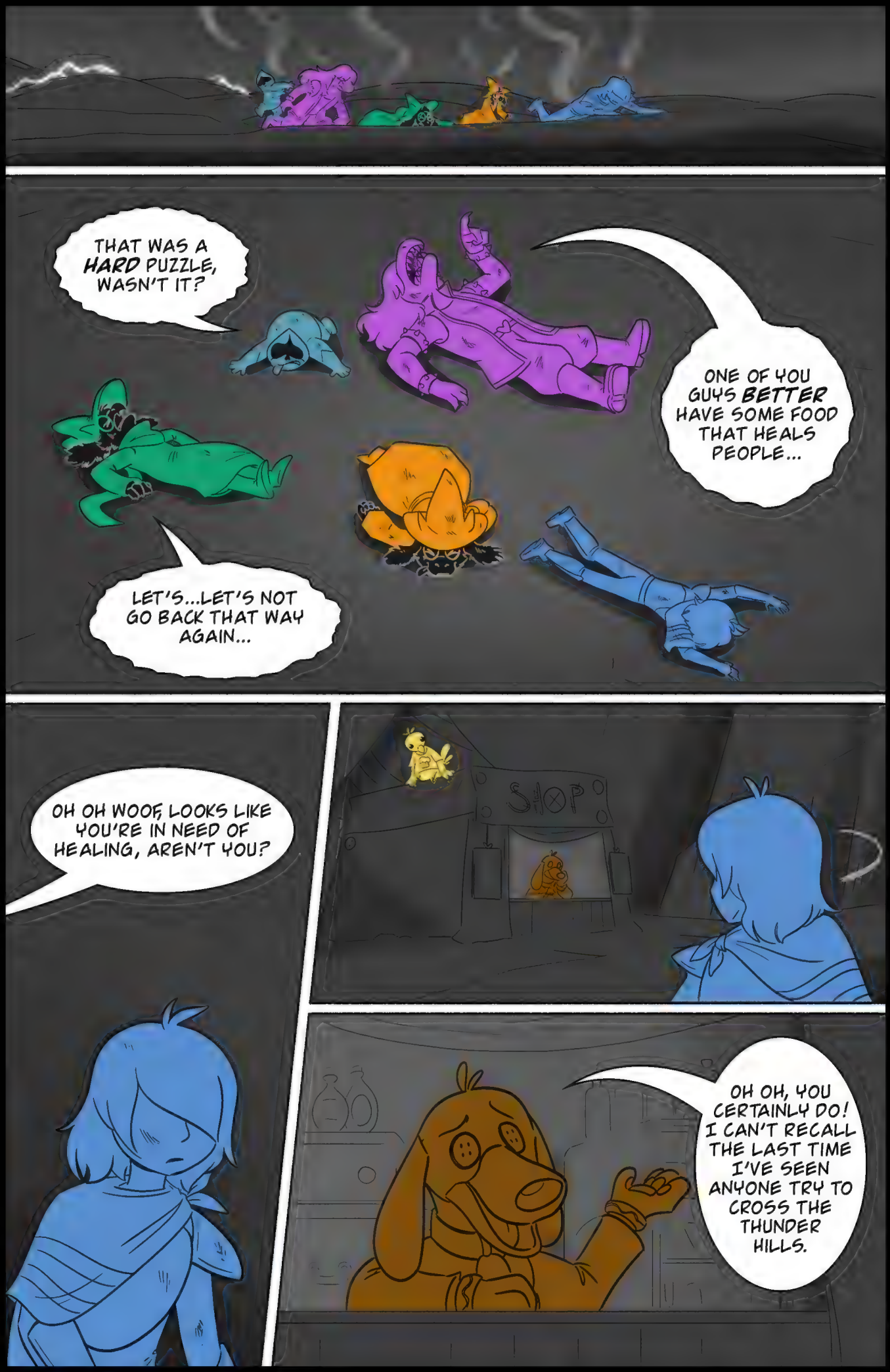
REALLY? GOSH...THAT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM THE LIGHTNERS THE PEOPLE HERE REMEMBER.
THOSE LIGHTNERS HAD NOTHING BUT TIME TO EXPLORE. NO GOALS OR ANYTHING.
YEAH, IT SUCKS NOT BEING A KID.
WELL...LOOK AT IT THIS WAY! NOW YOU'RE GETTING TO SEE SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW, TOO!
YOU KNOW...YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!
I SUPPOSE IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT NEW PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE ME TO ENTIRELY NEW PLACES!

BOOOM!!
BOOM!
AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ACTUALLY SEE WHAT'S PAST THE DEADLY THUNDER HILLS!
NICE.

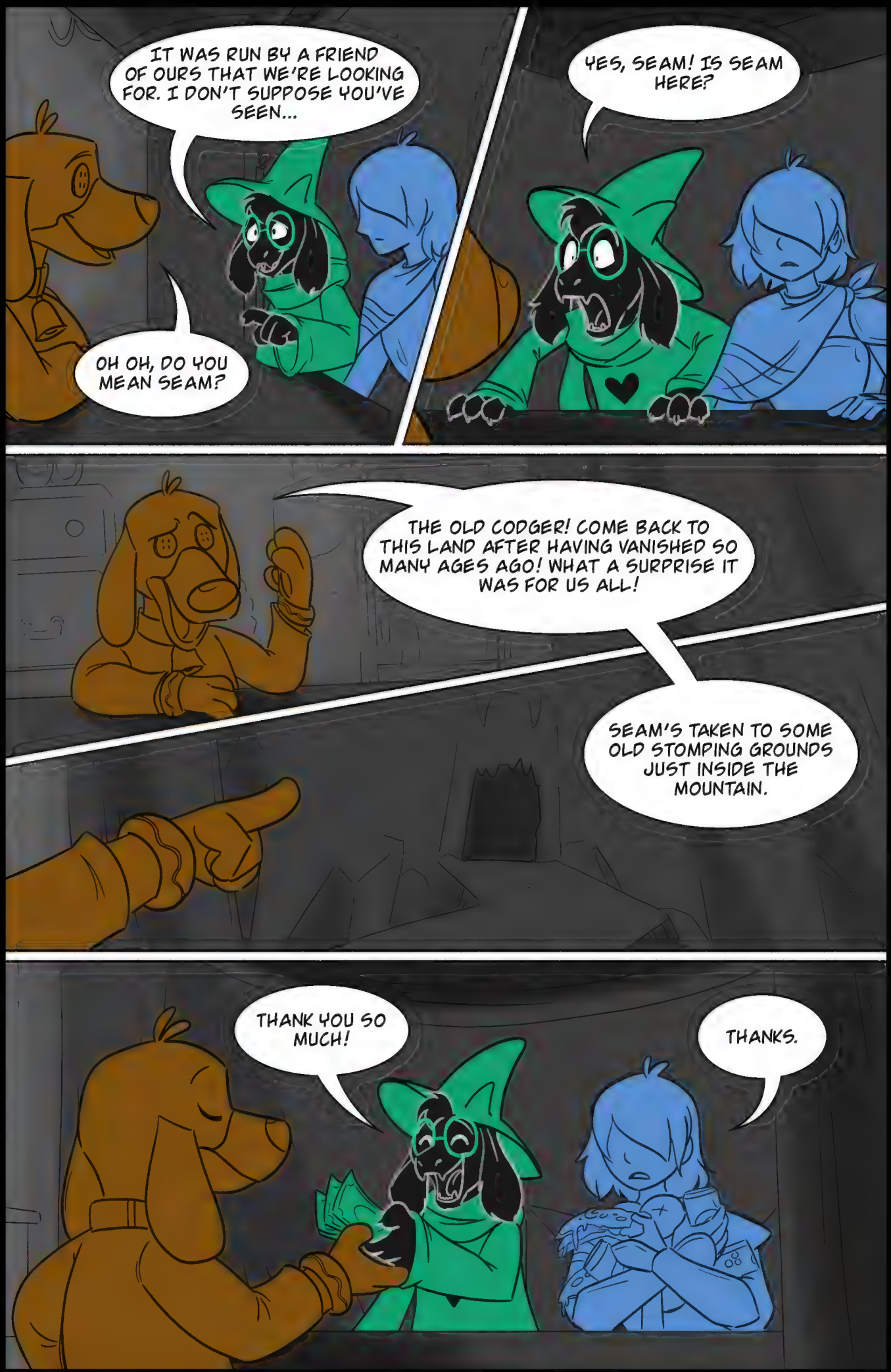
7
14
9
8
15
BOOM!!

12
CRAKKLLK
13
BOOM!!
7
AAGH!
14
10
NNGH!
9
KRIS! THE HELL'RE YOU DOING?! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO NOT WALK INTO THE ELECTRICITY!!

WHY WON'T... YOU STOP...
WHAT?
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
CRACKK
BOOOOM
KRAAKK


THAT WAS A HARD PUZZLE, WASN'T IT?
ONE OF YOU GUYS BETTER HAVE SOME FOOD THAT HEALS PEOPLE...
LET'S...LET'S NOT GO BACK THAT WAY AGAIN...
OH OH WOOF, LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN NEED OF HEALING, AREN'T YOU?
SHOP
OH OH, YOU CERTAINLY DO! I CAN'T RECALL THE LAST TIME I'VE SEEN ANYONE TRY TO CROSS THE THUNDER HILLS.

WELL, IT'S BEEN AN EXCITING FEW DAYS, SO LET'S SAY HALF OFF EVERYTHING IN MY SHOP! THE NAME IS PUTTON.
SHOP
I WANT ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T TASTE LIKE SOCKS!!
A SLICE OF DARKPIZZA, THEN? MAYBE TWO?
SLAM!
TWO!
SAY...THIS SHOP KIND OF REMINDS ME OF ONE BACK HOME!


IT WAS RUN BY A FRIEND OF OURS THAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR. I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'VE SEEN...
OH OH, DO YOU MEAN SEAM?
YES, SEAM! IS SEAM HERE?
THE OLD CODGER! COME BACK TO THIS LAND AFTER HAVING VANISHED SO MANY AGES AGO! WHAT A SURPRISE IT WAS FOR US ALL!
SEAM'S TAKEN TO SOME OLD STOMPING GROUNDS JUST INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN.
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
THANKS.

SHOP
AND YOU'VE ALREADY FOUND YOUR MISSING FRIEND?
HOW EXCITING! REAL GOALS ARE ADVENTURE!
GLUG GLUG
THEN LET'S GET GOING!
SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE TOLD THEM ABOUT THAT CREEPY MAN SEAM WAS TALKING TO?
OH OH NO, I'M SURE IT WASN'T IMPORTANT.

I THOUGHT THE FOUNTAIN WOULD BE HERE...
WE STILL NEED TO FIND SEAM FIRST.

WE'RE NOT GONNA HAVE TO SEARCH THIS WHOLE MOUNTAIN, ARE WE? THAT'LL TAKE FOREVER!
MAYBE LESS TIME THAN YOU ASSUME.
HEY!!

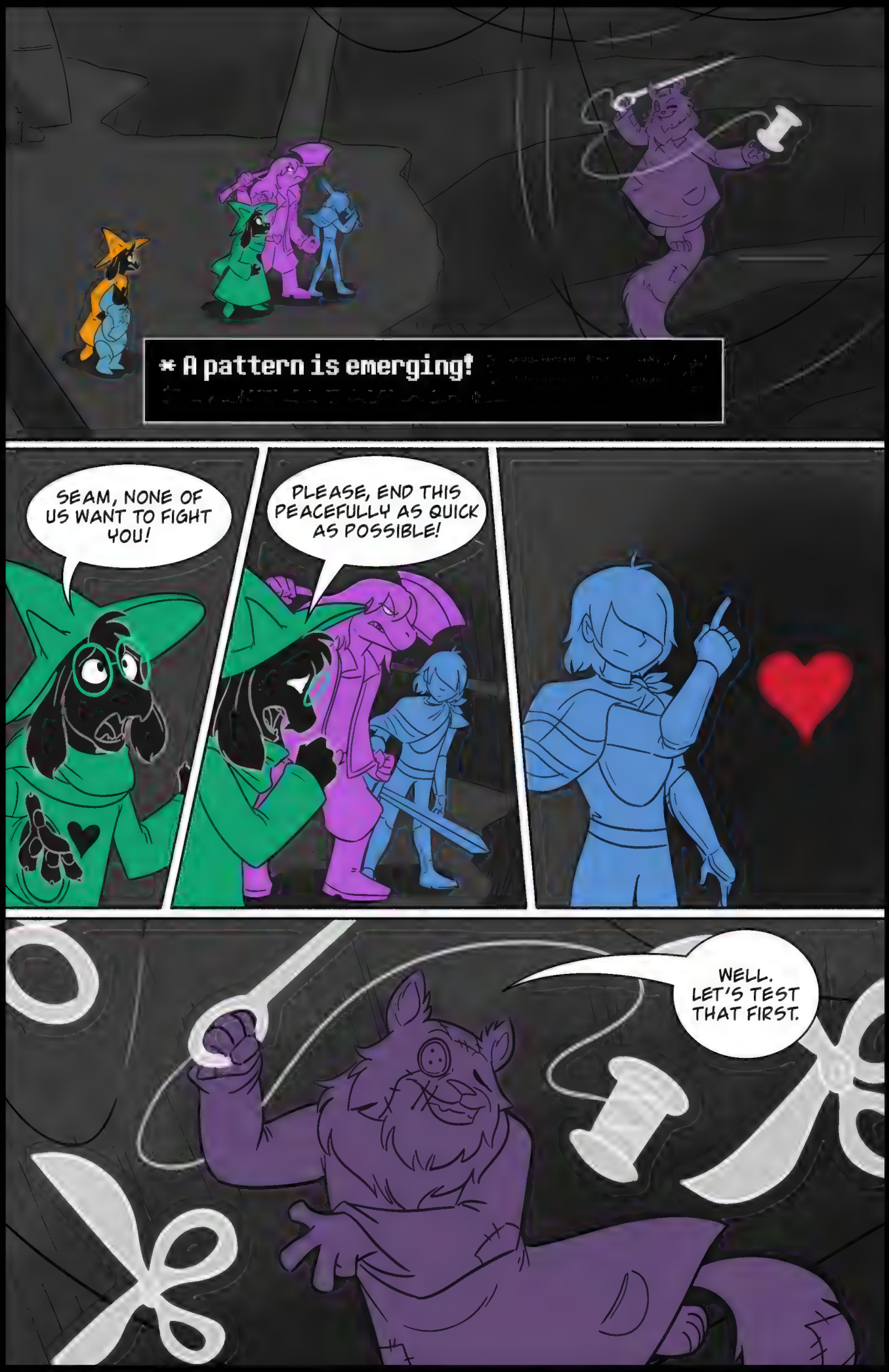
OH, DEAR.
AND SOME PART OF ME HOPED HE WOULDN'T BE RIGHT...
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU, AND BRING YOU BACK HOME!
THAT SO?
NOT INTERESTED.

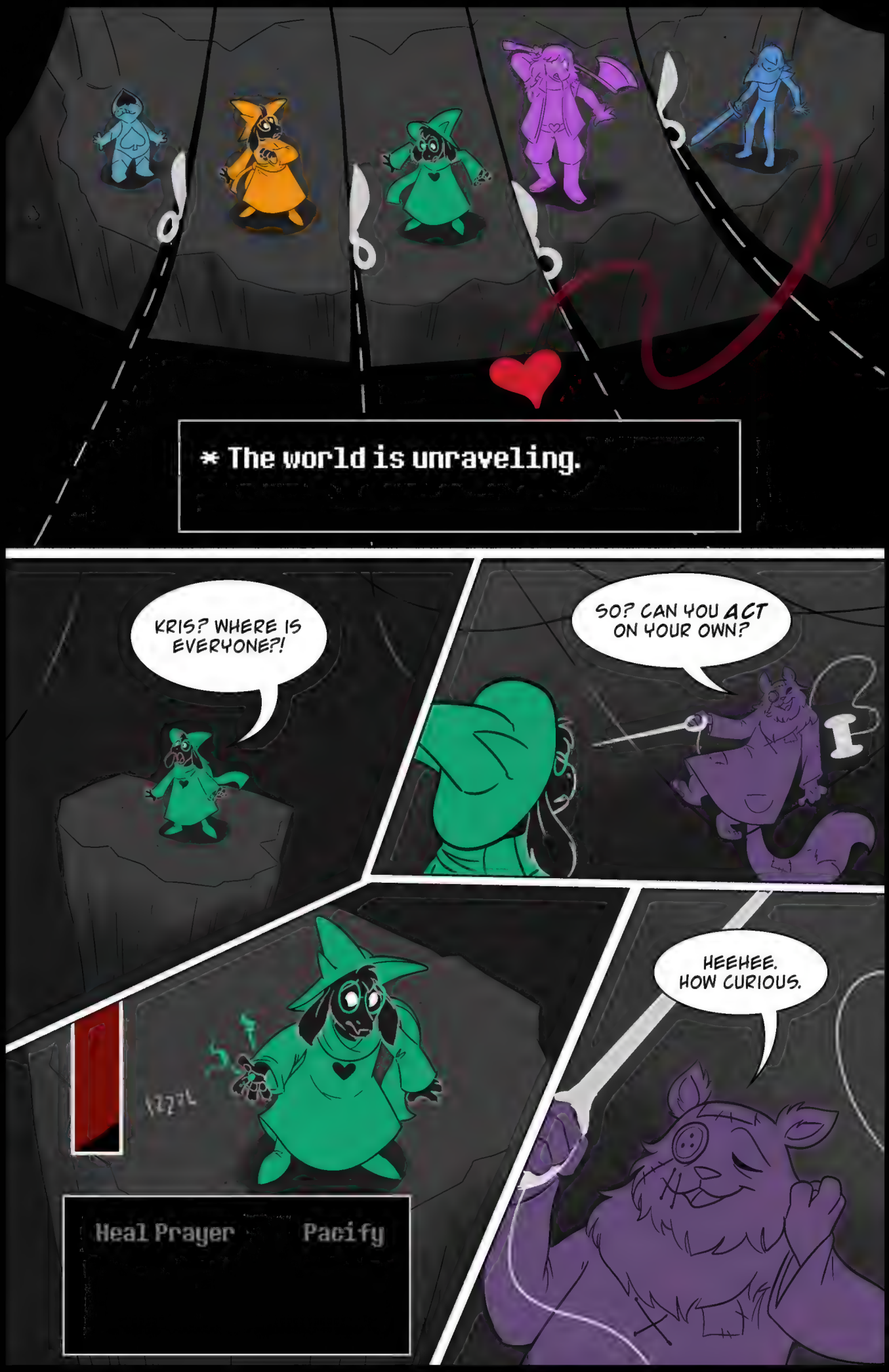
YOU CAN'T BE 'NOT INTERESTED!' DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH SMELLY JUNGLE WE WALKED THROUGH TO RESCUE YOU?!
HAHA...LOTS, I'M SURE. BUT STILL NO INTEREST.
YOU GOTTA COME BACK WITH US! HOW'M I SUPPOSED TO RULE RIGHT IF MY SUBJECTS ARE MISSING?!
WE DON'T KNOW IF THE LIGHTNERS CAN REBUILD OUR KINGDOM WITHOUT EVERYONE THERE.
PRINCES WITHOUT SUBJECTS...THAT IS THE LEAST OF WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.
YOU SURE THIS IS THE FRIEND YOU WERE LOOKING FOR? SEEMS TO BE A BIT OF A DOWNER.

HMM, ANOTHER ONE...?
HEEHEE. OH MY.
YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DO YOU?
WALKED THROUGH A LOT OF JUNGLE AND DANGEROUS ZAPPY PUZZLES TO GET HERE, I THINK.
SEWING THE TWO FABRICS TOGETHER, STITCH BY STITCH.
A THREAD OF MANY COLORS, BINDING LIGHT TO DARK. DON'T YOU SEE?
I SEE THIS IS WAY TOO MUCH TALKING! JUST COME WITH US ALREADY!

FEW THINGS MORE DISAPPOINTING THAN A CRUEL PERSON BEING CORRECT.
THE POISON HE USED ON MY FRIEND'S MIND... IT'S BITTER.
SEAM, PLEASE...CAN'T YOU TELL US *PLAINLY* WHAT'S WRONG?
NO. BUT MY WORDS DON'T MATTER, ANYWAY. NEITHER DO MY CHOICES. OR YOURS.
I KNOW IF I CONTINUE TO REFUSE, YOU'LL FORCE THE ISSUE.
BUT BEFORE THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION... THERE'S A THING OR TWO I'D LIKE TO KNOW.
FOR MY OWN... *CURIOSITY.*

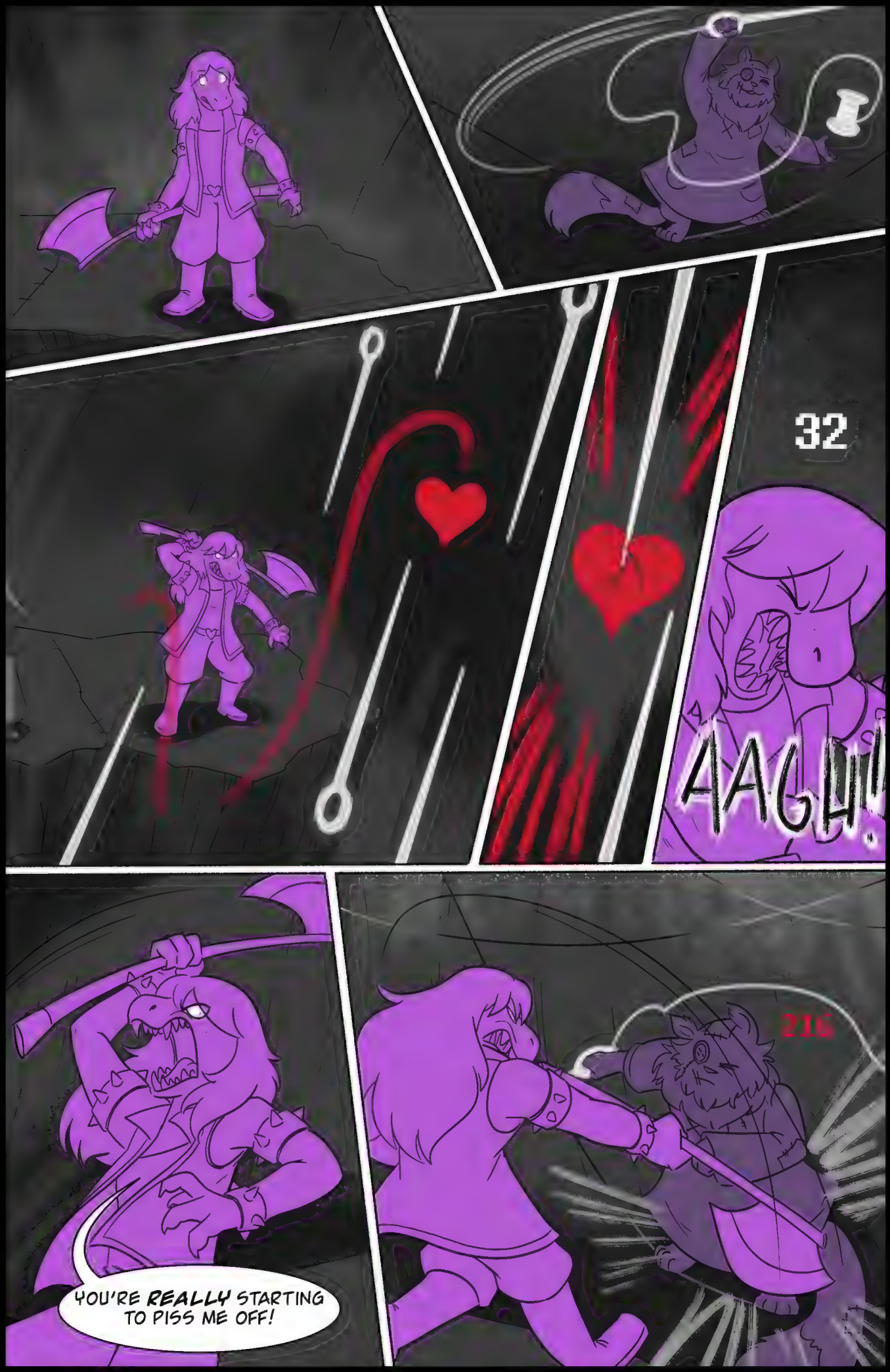
PERHAPS I'M NOSTALGIC, BACK IN THIS PLACE.
I GREATLY MISS THE GAMES JEVIL AND I USED TO PLAY TOGETHER.
SO.
LET'S PLAY.

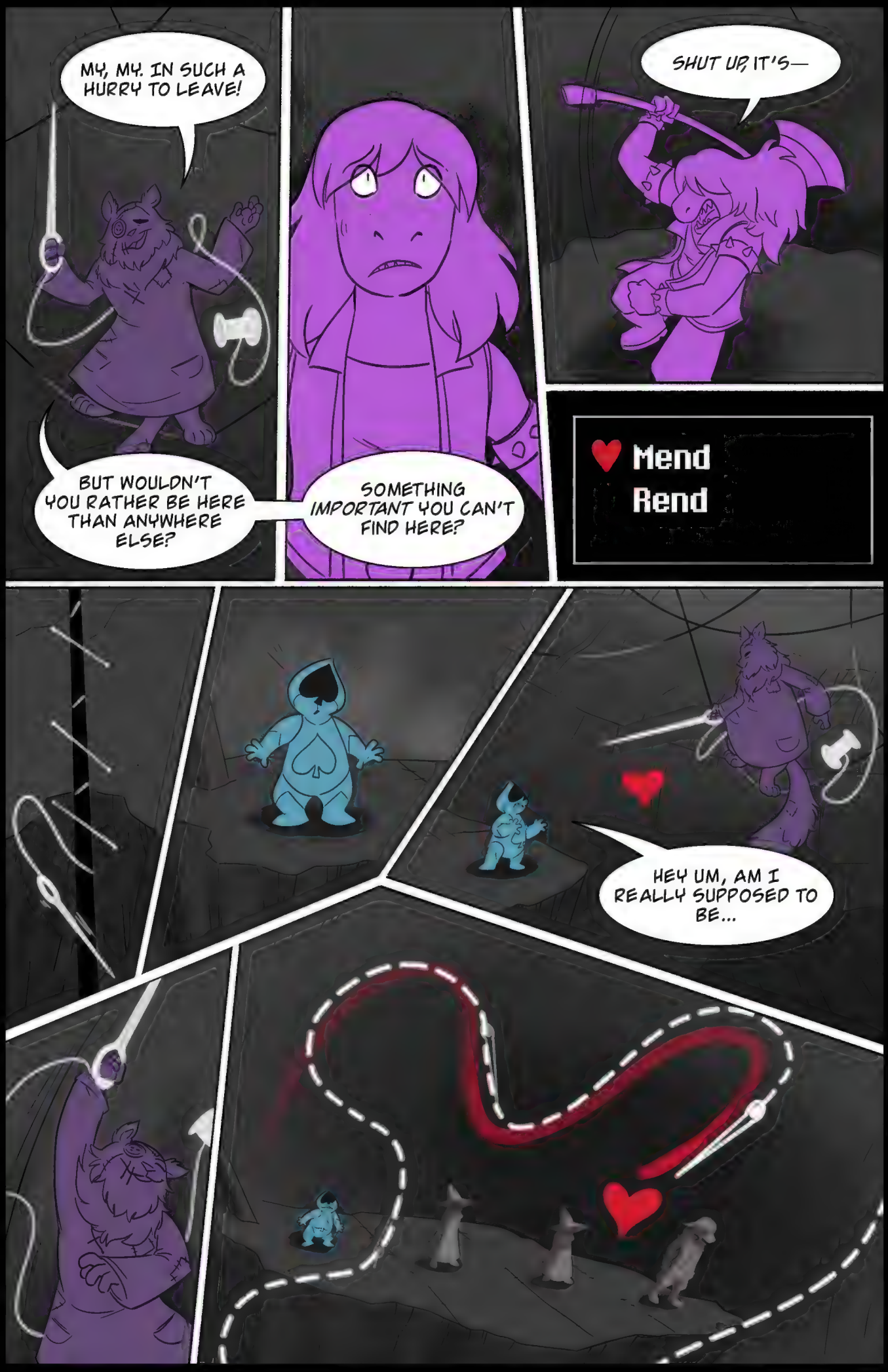

* A pattern is emerging!
SEAM, NONE OF US WANT TO FIGHT YOU!
PLEASE, END THIS PEACEFULLY AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE!
WELL. LET'S TEST THAT FIRST.


* The world is unraveling.
KRIS? WHERE IS EVERYONE?!
SO? CAN YOU ACT ON YOUR OWN?
HEEHEE. HOW CURIOUS.
Heal Prayer
Pacify

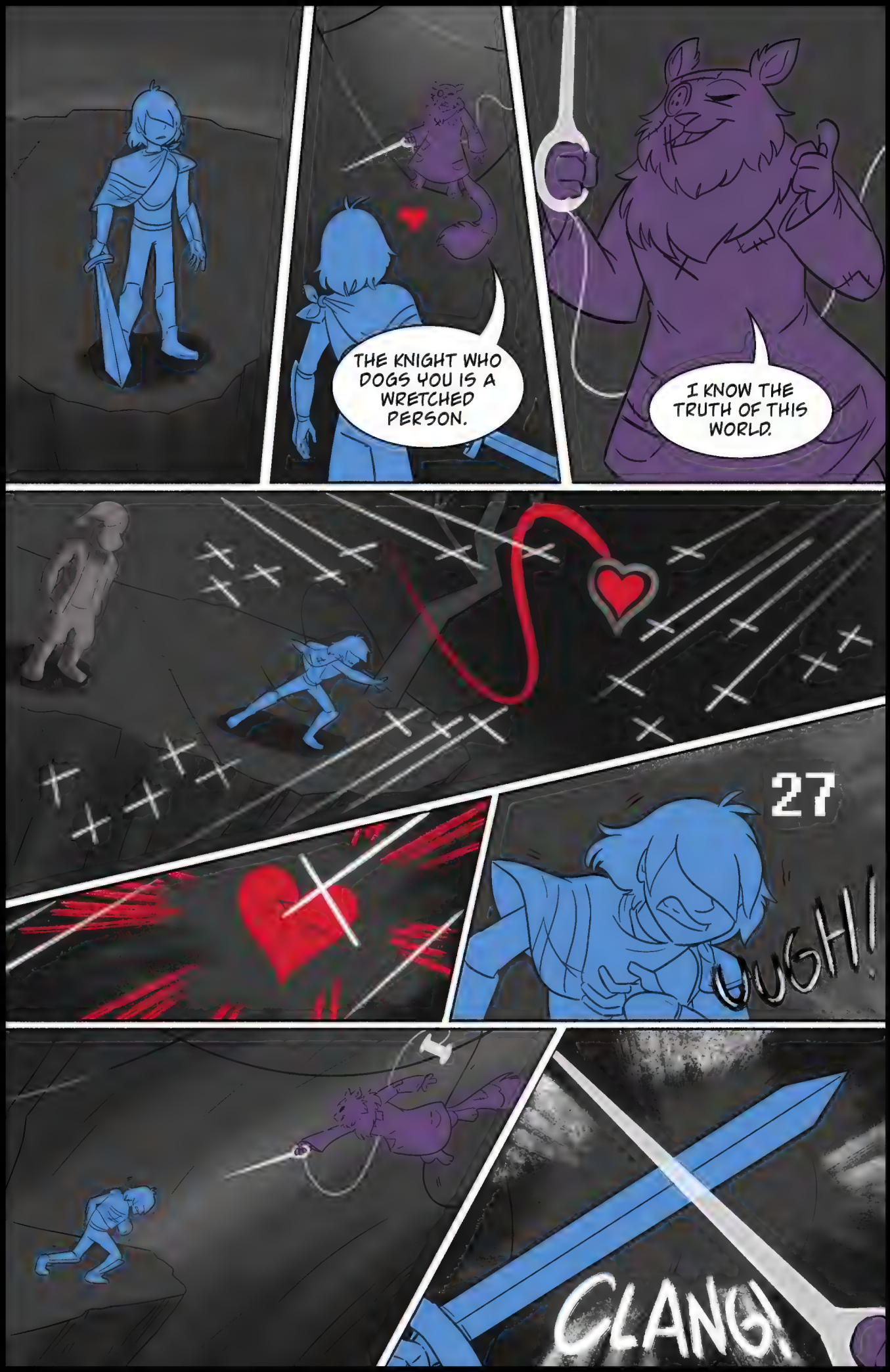
WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO?!
OH, THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.
Mend
Rend
FWPP!
WHILE THIS IS VERY EXCITING, I UH, DON'T KNOW IF IT'S MY PLACE TO—
YIKES!!

THEY SAY LIFE'S ABOUT THE JOURNEY, NOT THE DESTINATION. BUT IF THAT'S TRUE...WHY REACH A DESTINATION AT ALL?
Haste
* Things are moving too fast for you!
AFTER ALL, WHAT IF THE DESTINATION...
...IS JUST A DISAPPOINTMENT?
Mend
Rend


32
AAGH!
YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF!


MY, MY. IN SUCH A HURRY TO LEAVE!
BUT WOULDN'T YOU RATHER BE HERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE?
SOMETHING IMPORTANT YOU CAN'T FIND HERE?
SHUT UP, IT'S—
Mend
Rend
HEY UM, AM I REALLY SUPPOSED TO BE...

Spade Lance
OH, LITTLE PRINCE. CAN'T YOU ACT ON ANY OF YOUR OWN STRENGTH?
Y-YEAH! IF I... JUST...
Spade Lance
OH, DEAR. NO WONDER YOU'RE SO DEPENDENT ON THESE LIGHTNERS.
NO, I-I CAN...I CAN DO THINGS ON MY OWN, TOO!
Mend
Rend


THE KNIGHT WHO DOGS YOU IS A WRETCHED PERSON.
I KNOW THE TRUTH OF THIS WORLD.
27
OUGH!
CLANG!

YOU THINK IT'S YOU WHO IS RESCUING THESE GAME PIECES. MOVING THEM WHERE NEEDED.
BUT FRIEND... IT'S *YOU* WHO IS THE PIECE BEING PLAYED.
I KNOW.
AH. PLEASE FORGIVE THE CONFUSION, LIGHTNER...
...BUT I WASN'T SPEAKING TO YOU.

Mend
Rend
Heal Prayer
Pacify
SEAM, PLEASE STOP!
OH, ALL RIGHT.
* You won!

"ALL RIGHT?" WAS THERE A *POINT* TO YOU ATTACKING US?!
CURIOSITY. IT'S BEEN SATISFIED.
THAT...AND I'M AFRAID I CAN'T PLAY LIKE I USED TO. OUT OF PRACTICE.
CRRK
THAT WAS PRETTY SCARY FOR SOMEONE OUT OF PRACTICE...
WILL YOU *PLEASE* COME BACK WITH US NOW, SEAM?
MY 'NO' IS MEANINGLESS. SO THE ANSWER'S YES.
UH...THANK YOU...?

SO HOW DO WE LEAVE THIS PLACE? THERE'S NO FOUNTAIN HERE!
SURE THERE IS! ONCE YOU LIGHT UP THE CLAW AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, THE FOUNTAIN WILL APPEAR!
HOW DO I KNOW THAT...?

BOOM!
FWOOOOM
THAT'S FUNNY, I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN THE FOUNTAIN BEFORE. HOW INCREDIBLE!
THEN LET'S GET GOING ALREADY.

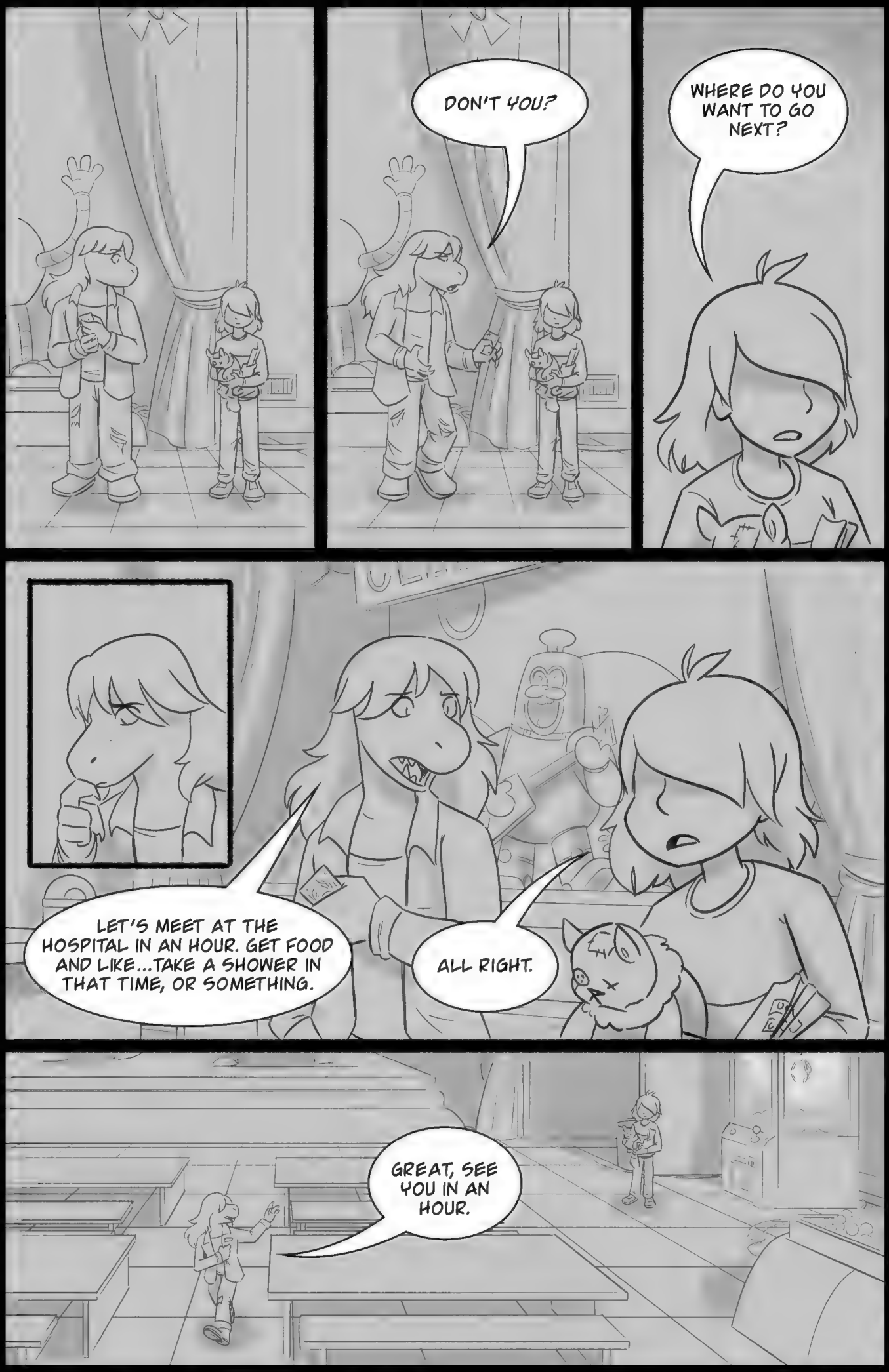
IT'S SAD YOU GOTTA...LEAVE SO SOON AGAIN.
YEAH...
JUST 'CAUSE I WANT TO FIX YOUR KINGDOM FAST! SO WE'RE COMING RIGHT BACK INTO THE DARK WORLD TO SEE YOU GUYS AGAIN, OKAY?
...OKAY.
LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOUR SHOPKEEPER FRIEND WANTED TO FIGHT, OR IF YOU HEARD SOMETHING UPSETTING, BUT...

. . . .
BUT...DID YOU HAVE FUN HERE? DID YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING NEW?
YES.
THEN IT'S NOT ALL BAD! JUST KEEP DISCOVERING NEW THINGS, AND YOU'LL BE FINE!
I KNOW WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN SOME DAY.
HOPE SO.

DON'T LOOK SO GLUM. TRUE, THE DESTRUCTION OF ORDER'S CERTAIN...BUT I THINK SOMEONE HERE WAS HAVING FUN.
AND FUN MAKES YOU CARE.
WHEN PEOPLE CARE, UNEXPECTED THINGS HAPPEN.

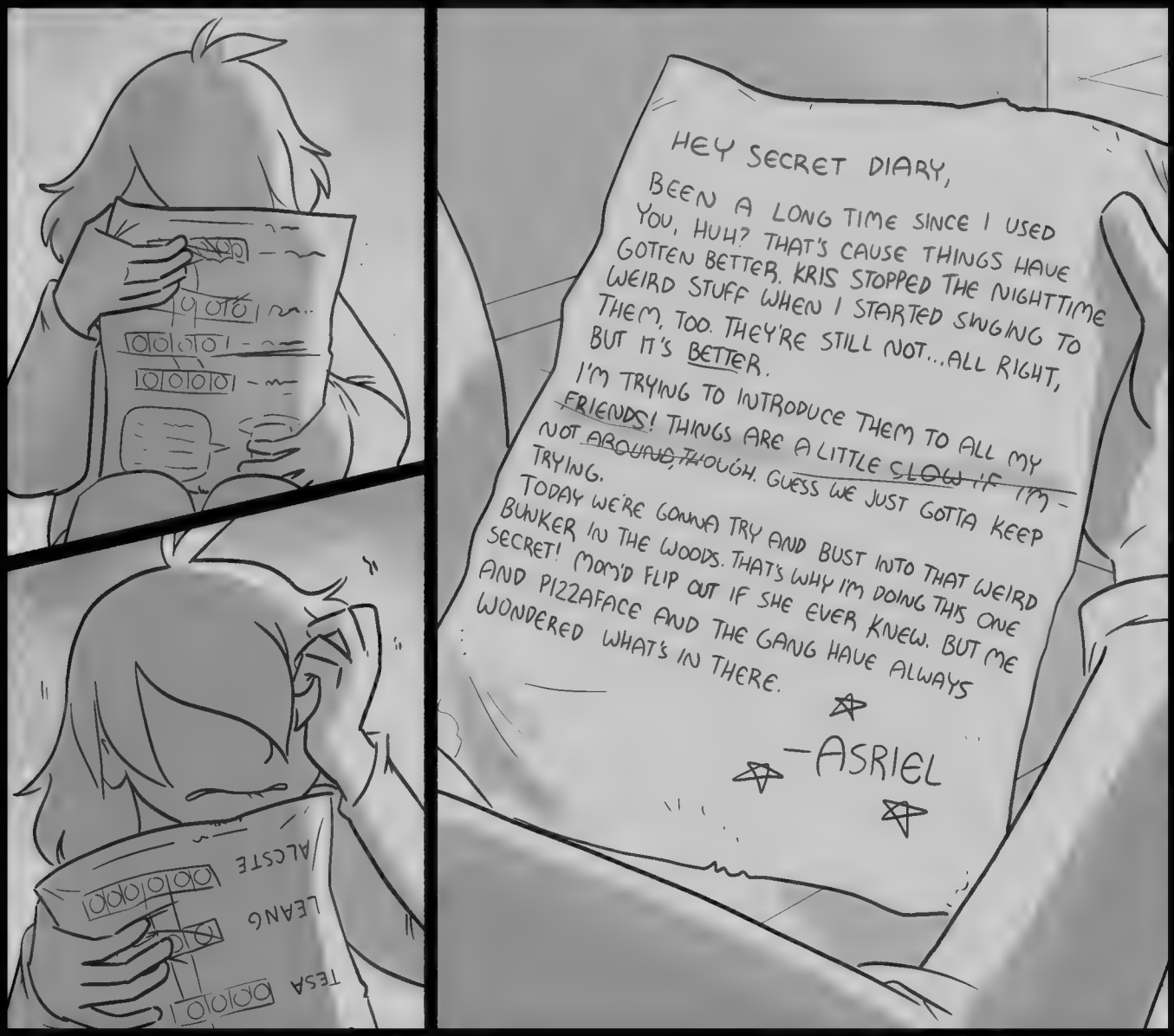
THWUMP!!
NNGH...
UUGH...
FOUND ANOTHER.
UGH, YOU HOLD ONTO IT. IT SUCKS WE HAD TO FIGHT LIKE THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE!

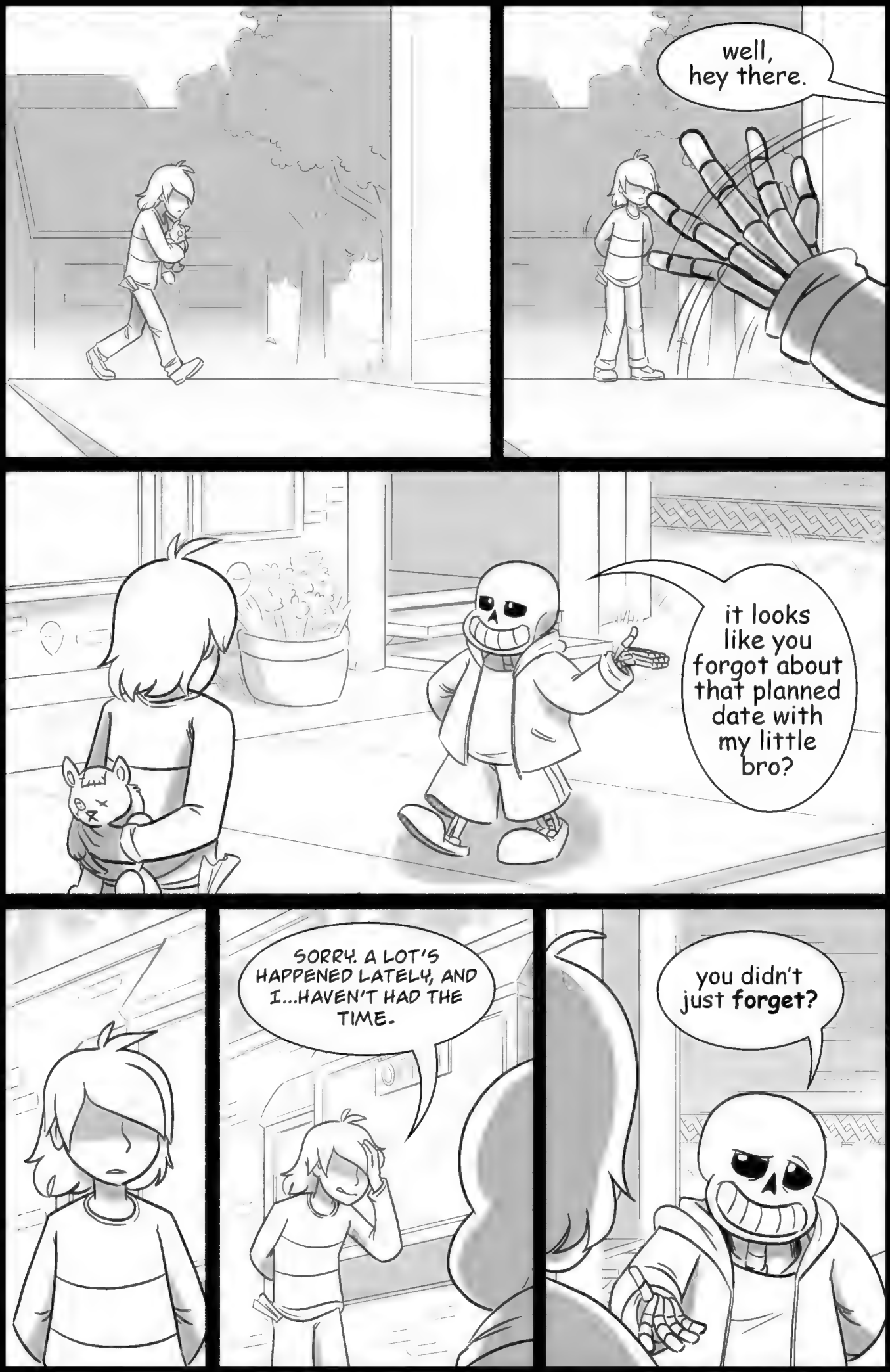
LOOKS LIKE IT'S AFTERNOON.
NO POLICE, AT LEAST.
HEY, KRIS...MAYBE WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AND GET THE NEXT PART TODAY, TOO.
ALREADY?
I KNOW IT'S QUICK AFTER ALL THAT WALKING AND FIGHTING, BUT...
I JUST WANNA FIX EVERYTHING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.


DON'T YOU?
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO NEXT?
LET'S MEET AT THE HOSPITAL IN AN HOUR. GET FOOD AND LIKE...TAKE A SHOWER IN THAT TIME, OR SOMETHING.
ALL RIGHT.
GREAT, SEE YOU IN AN HOUR.

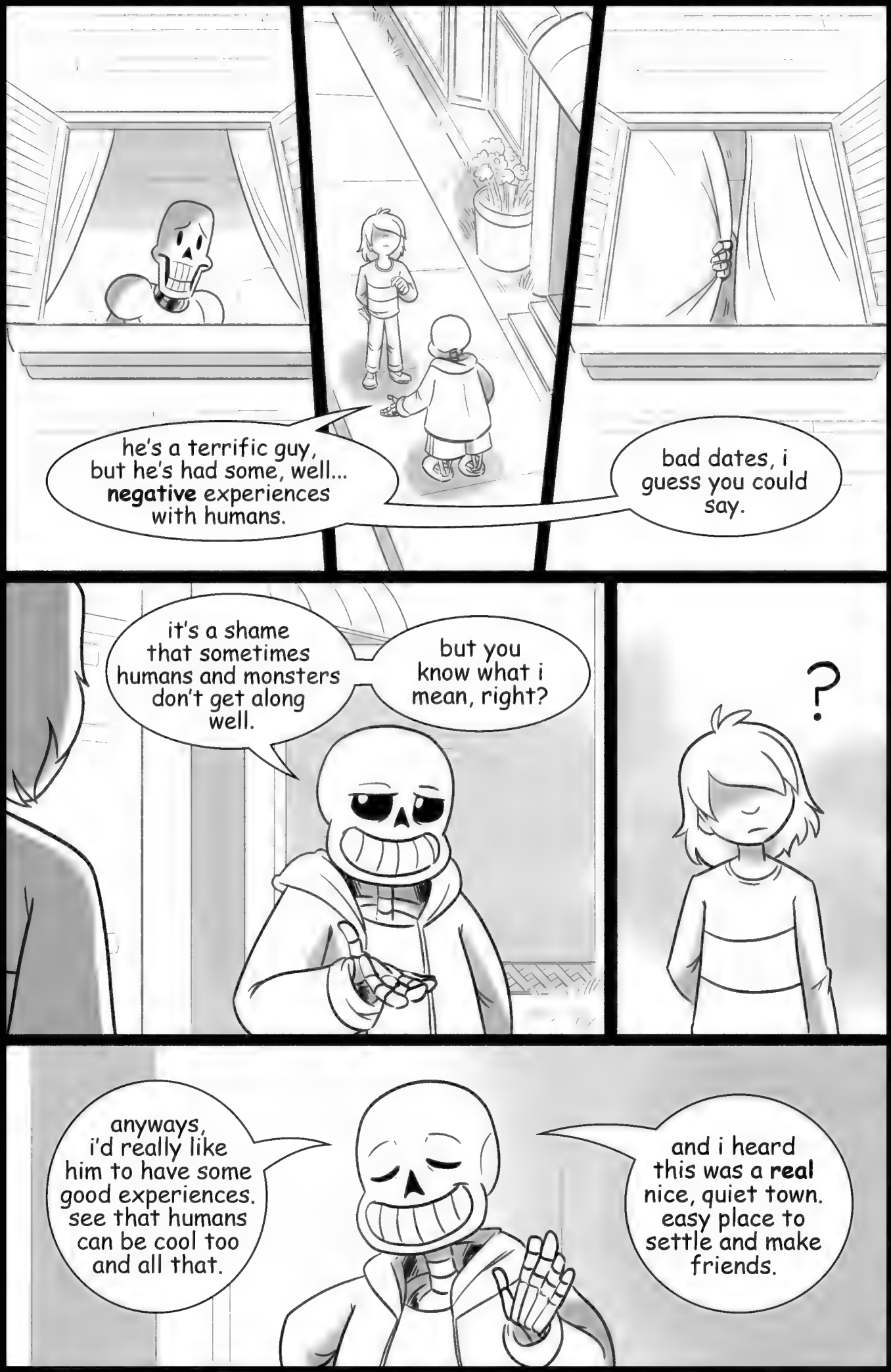
DANGER
DANGER
DANGER

DOFO
ICE-E
HEY KID'S! CAN YOU HELP ME SOLVE THIS PUZZLE?


HEY SECRET DIARY,
BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I USED YOU, HUH? THAT'S CAUSE THINGS HAVE GOTTEN BETTER. KRIS STOPPED THE NIGHTTIME WEIRD STUFF WHEN I STARTED SWGING TO THEM, TOO. THEY'RE STILL NOT...ALL RIGHT, BUT IT'S BETTER.
I'M TRYING TO INTRODUCE THEM TO ALL MY FRIENDS! THINGS ARE A LITTLE SLOW IF I'M NOT AROUND, THOUGH. GUESS WE JUST GOTTA KEEP TRYING.
TODAY WE'RE GONNA TRY AND BUST INTO THAT WEIRD BUNKER IN THE WOODS. THAT'S WHY I'M DOING THIS ONE SECRET! MOM'D FLIP OUT IF SHE EVER KNEW. BUT ME AND PIZZAFACE AND THE GANG HAVE ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT'S IN THERE.
-ASRIEL
TESA
LEANG
ALCSTE


well, hey there.
it looks like you forgot about that planned date with my little bro?
SORRY. A LOT'S HAPPENED LATELY, AND I...HAVEN'T HAD THE TIME.
you didn't just **forget?**

hey bud, don't worry about it.
it's probably for the best that we not rush into things right now, anyway.
NOT RUSH?
SKRTCH
ahh, yeah. guess i should be honest with ya, shouldn't i?
see, i moved us to this town for my little bro.


he's a terrific guy, but he's had some, well... **negative** experiences with humans.
bad dates, i guess you could say.
it's a shame that sometimes humans and monsters don't get along well.
but you know what i mean, right?
?
anyways, i'd really like him to have some good experiences. see that humans can be cool too and all that.
and i heard this was a **real** nice, quiet town. easy place to settle and make friends.

but, joke's on me... we get here, and there's just no humans in town!
you're the only one that i've seen for **miles.**
i don't suppose you know **why** that is...
...do you?
OPEN
GHHH
hey, don't worry about it. maybe it's just one of those things,

how about this. when your schedule's free, just give me a call and we'll meet up here.
i know you got my number.
thanks, kid. appreciate it.
S-SURE.
and hey, say hi to your mom for me!
OPEN
knock knock

Chapter Four

Irales

KRIS? IS THAT YOU, SWEETIE?
COME GIVE ME A HUG, I HAVE NOT SEEN YOU ALL DAY!

I HOPE CLASS HAS BEEN GOOD FOR YOU.
YOU...HAVE BEEN IN CLASS...RIGHT?
I KNOW YOU WANTED TO WALK THERE YOURSELF...AND YOUR TEACHER AND CLASSMATES HAVE NOT TOLD ME OTHERWISE...
MMM-HMM.
ALL RIGHT.
I AM AFRAID YOU MAY NEED TO HEAT UP SOME LEFTOVERS FOR YOURSELF TONIGHT...I HAVE BEEN INVITED OUT.

?
OH, IT IS NOTHING FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT!
I AM JUST... GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE NEW.
HOME SWEET HOME
HOME SWEET HOME
SIGH
TRUTHFULLY KRIS, I AM A LITTLE ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR BROTHER COMING HOME SOON.
I KEEP PREPARING, AND THEN FINDING SOMETHING NEW TO DO...
I COULD USE A NIGHT NOT THINKING OF COOKING AND CLEANING DISHES.

OH, DEAR...YOU ARE ANXIOUS TO SEE HIM AGAIN TOO, ARE YOU NOT?
I MISS HIM.
HOME
AND I AM CERTAIN HE MISSES YOU, TOO. BUT YOU WILL SEE HIM AGAIN BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!
I KNOW.
DO YOU HAVE HOMEWORK OR SOMETHING TO KEEP YOU BUSY TONIGHT? MAYBE SOMETHING WITH A FRIEND—
I WAS GOING TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL.
...TO...VISIT RUDY.

KRIS, THAT IS VERY KIND OF YOU! I KNOW HE WILL APPRECIATE IT, AND I AM SO GLAD THAT YOU ARE THINKING OF HIM AND HIS FAMILY!
...I DO HOPE THEY FIND THE CAUSE SOON...
YEAH.
WELL! DO NOT STAY OUT TOO LATE!
I KNOW TOMORROW IS A WEEKEND, BUT YOU SHOULD KEEP UP THIS HABIT OF GETTING UP ON TIME.
HAVE A GOOD TIME, DEAR!
CLICK!

HOSPITAL
HOSPITAL
YOU GET FOOD?
GOT SOMETHING, ANYWAY.
SO, ON THE WAY HERE, I WAS THINKING...WE CAN NEVER SEEM TO *FIND* THE PIECES WE'RE LOOKING FOR NORMALLY. WE CAN ONLY FIND THEM WHEN WE GO INTO THE DARK WORLD.
SEEMS THAT WAY.
SO...WHAT WE *SHOULD* BE LOOKING FOR IS AN ENTRANCE TO THE DARK WORLD HERE.
YEAH.

HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED TO EVEN LOOK IN A BUILDING FULL OF PEOPLE?!
GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO SEE.
HOSPITAL
DING DING
BACK AGAIN? THAT'S WEIRD.
WELL, PIANO'S OPEN IF YOU WANT IT.

THANKS.
NOW WHERE?
THIS WAY.

PAIN
WHAT ABOUT THIS WEIRDO?
PAIN

IT'S HERE!

PAIN
OOF!
OUCH!
DAMMIT!
MMFF!!
MMMM!
FFFF

FWOOOMP!
I WISH YOUR ENTRANCES INTO THE DARK WORLD WERE A LITTLE SOFTER!
ME TOO.
OOOH HEY, WHERE ARE WE NOW?

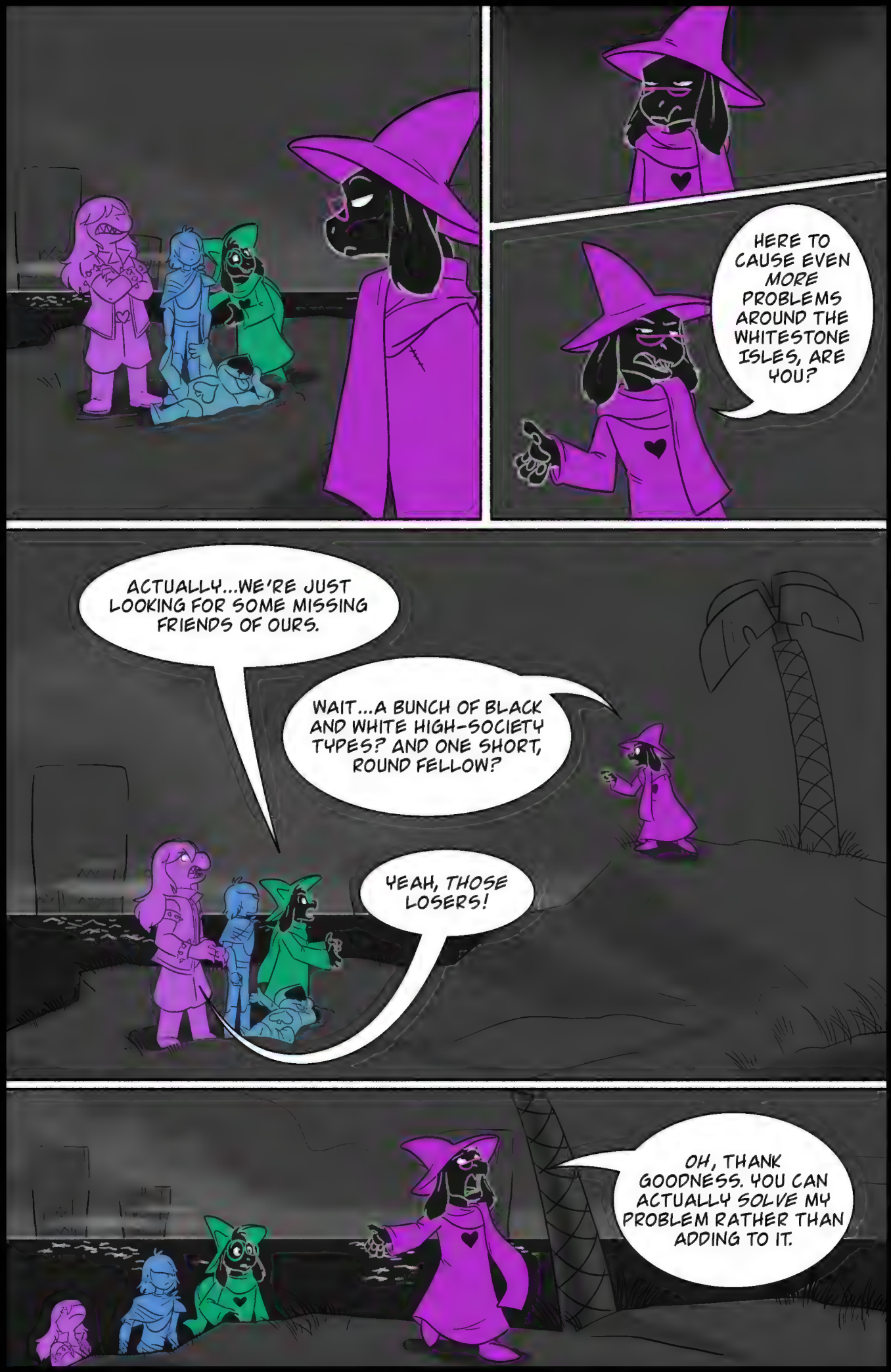
I KNEW IT!
A GIANT FLOATING BREAD BOX.
OR JUST AN ISLAND, PERHAPS?
OH, JUST TERRIFIC. MORE OF YOU.
AS IF THINGS WEREN'T ENOUGH OF A—
WAIT.

YOU'RE LIGHTNERS!
YEAH, DUH! WHAT'S YOUR DEAL?
WELL, TWO OF OUR PARTY ARE LIGHTNERS, BUT MYSELF AND THIS SHORT GUY HERE ARE ACTUALLY—
NOW HOLD ON!
TAP TAP

A HUMAN LIGHTNER! HMMM.
JUST AS THE PROPHECY FORETOLD.
EXCUSE ME! BUT WHAT SORT OF PROPHECY HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT KRIS?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT SORT OF PROPHECY?
WELL, YOU JUST SAID "JUST AS THE PROPHECY FORETOLD..."
YES, IT JUST SAID THEIR COMING WAS FORETOLD! NOT MUCH MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT.
HEY LITTLE LINTPRUNE, I'VE GOT A QUESTION! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM?

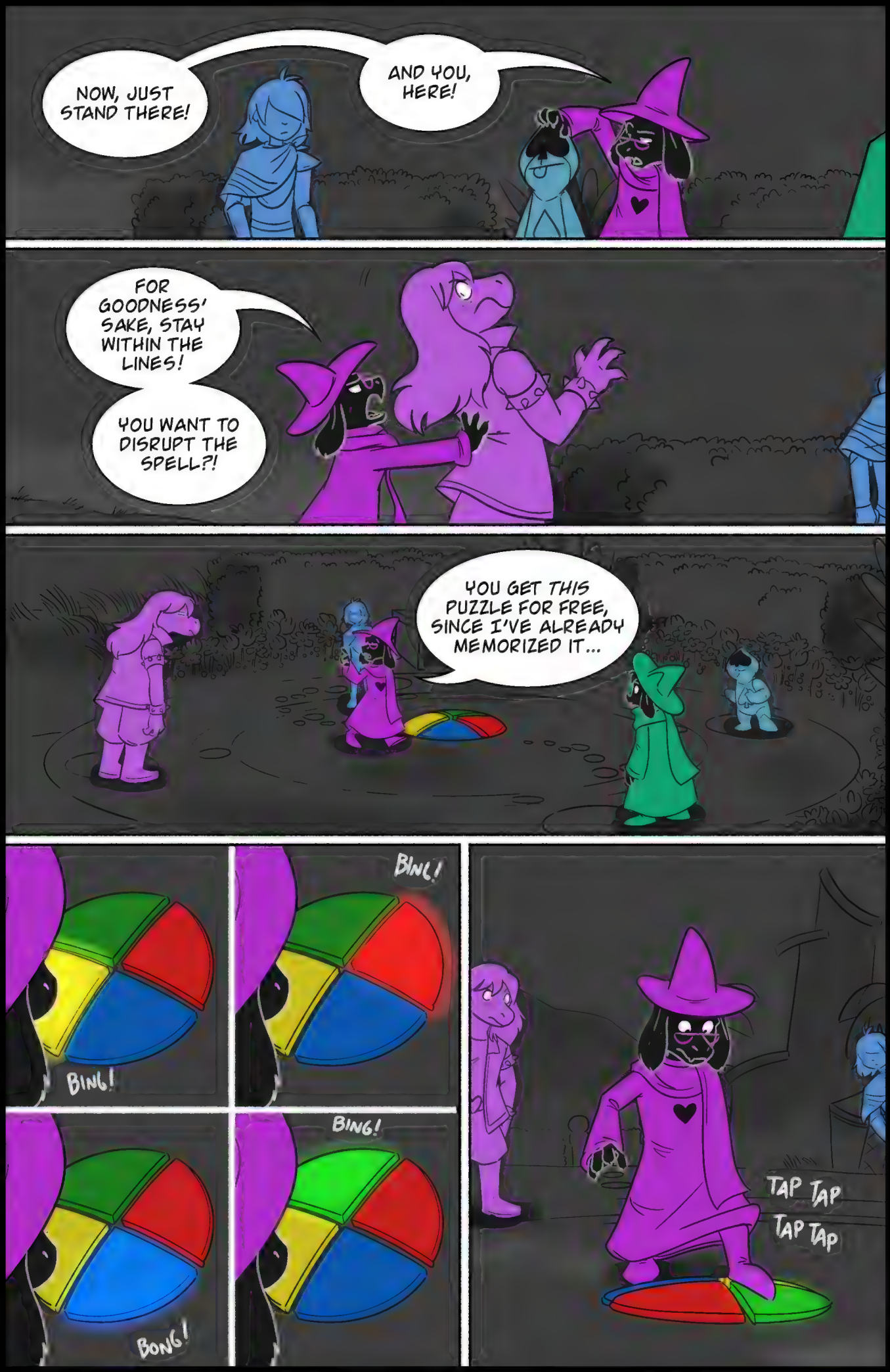
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S JUST FINE.
I MEAN YOUR OTHER ARM!
I ONLY HAVE ONE ARM! ARE YOU BLIND, OR JUST RUDE?!
OKAY WOW, I'M ALREADY NOT A FAN OF GOOFY GRAPE.
IS THERE A FLAVOR OF ME THAT YOU HAVE LIKED?...
NAMES, TOO? GOODNESS, ALL OF YOU COULD STAND TO HAVE MANNERS!
YEAH, SPEAKING OF MANNERS, YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US WHO YOU ARE, GOOFY GRAPE.

...
AH, A LACK OF INTRODUCTION WAS A MISTAKE ON MY PART.
I AM PRINCE IRALES, OF THE WHITESTONE ISLES.
A PRINCE WITHOUT SUBJECTS, AT LEAST UNTIL RECENTLY...
AND...YOU ARE...?
OH, APOLOGIES! I AM RALSEI, A DARK PRINCE OF A SIMILAR NATURE!
SUSIE.
KRIS.
...OF MY FAN CLUB, THE LANCER FAN CLUB!
SKRRRTCH


HERE TO CAUSE EVEN MORE PROBLEMS AROUND THE WHITESTONE ISLES, ARE YOU?
ACTUALLY...WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR SOME MISSING FRIENDS OF OURS.
WAIT...A BUNCH OF BLACK AND WHITE HIGH-SOCIETY TYPES? AND ONE SHORT, ROUND FELLOW?
YEAH, THOSE LOSERS!
OH, THANK GOODNESS. YOU CAN ACTUALLY SOLVE MY PROBLEM RATHER THAN ADDING TO IT.

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?
THIS!
AAAAH
I'M TIRED!
WAOAH
I'M TIRED!
I'M HUNGRY!
WHYYYY?
YEAAAH
I'M THIRSTY!
ARMLESS... BABIES...?
THESE WEEBLYS ALL SHOWED UP ON MY DOORSTEP WHEN THEY GOT KICKED OFF OF THEIR ISLAND BY THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL OF YOUR FRIENDS!
I HAVEN'T HAD A MOMENT'S PEACE SINCE THAT DAY!

SO IT IS YOU WHO MUST FIX THIS!
WE'D BE HAPPY TO!
THAT'S SATISFACTORY.
COME ALONG THEN, LANCER FAN CLUB MEMBERS!
NO WE WOULDN'T ACTUALLY, BUT WE'LL DO IT ANYWAY.
ACTUALLY, WE CALL OURSELVES THE FUN GANG!
YOU ALL HAVE TOO MANY NAMES.
HEY! HEY!
WAAH!
YOU'RE TOO BIG!
AHHH!
WHERE Y' GOIN'?

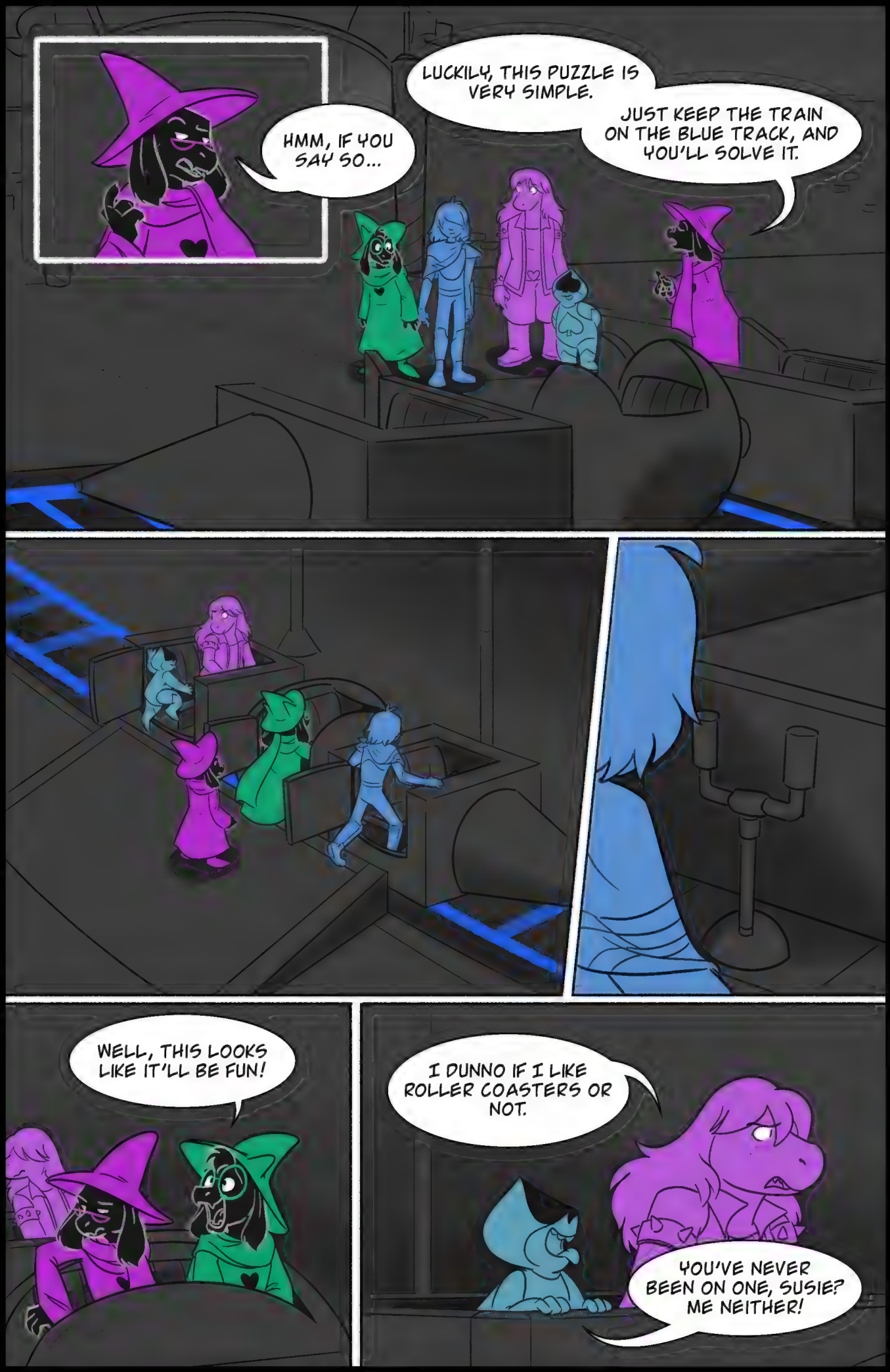

NOW, JUST STAND THERE!
AND YOU, HERE!
FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, STAY WITHIN THE LINES!
YOU WANT TO DISRUPT THE SPELL?!
YOU GET THIS PUZZLE FOR FREE, SINCE I'VE ALREADY MEMORIZED IT...
BING!
BING!
BONG!
BING!
TAP TAP
TAP TAP

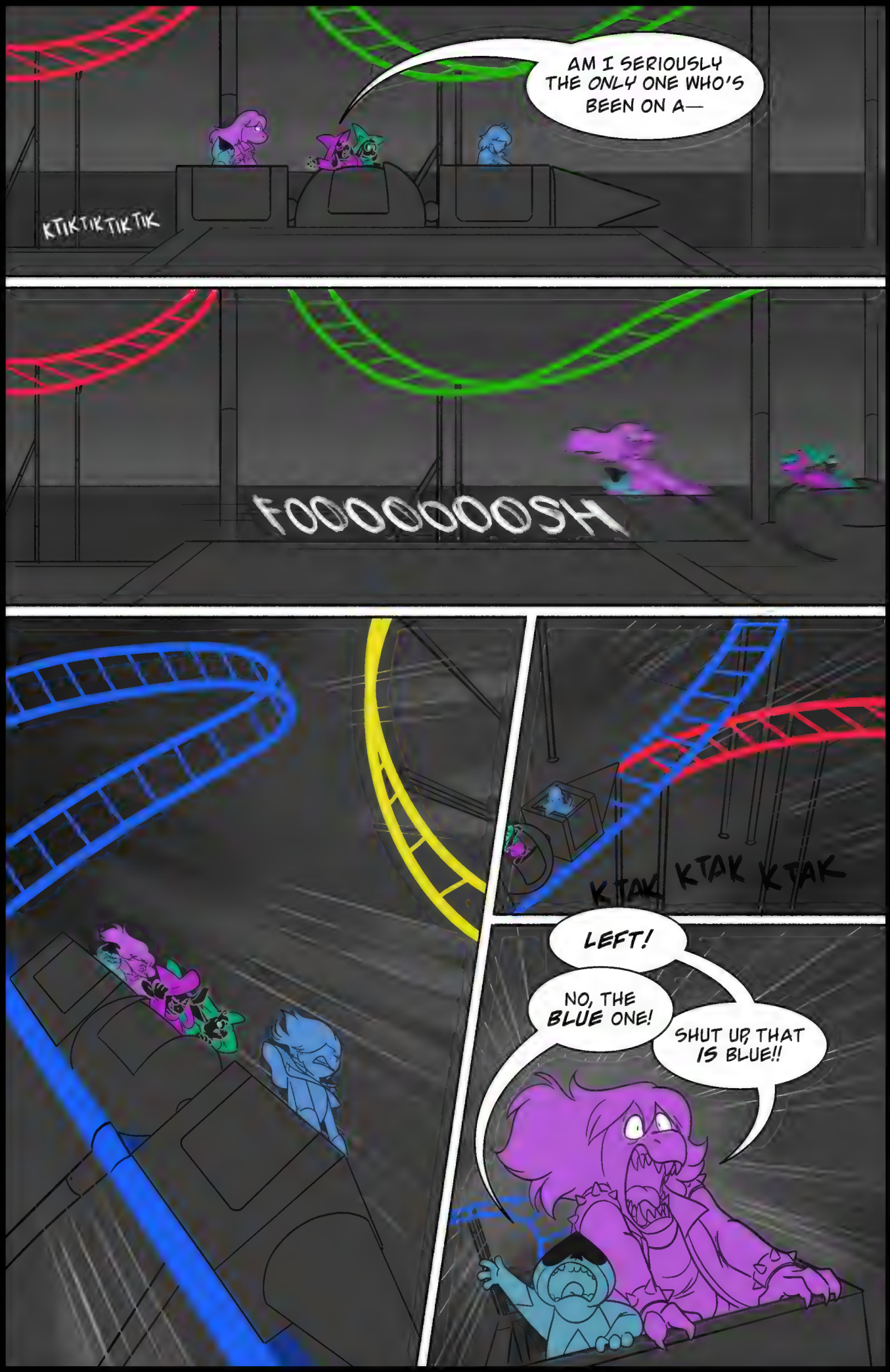
WOOP

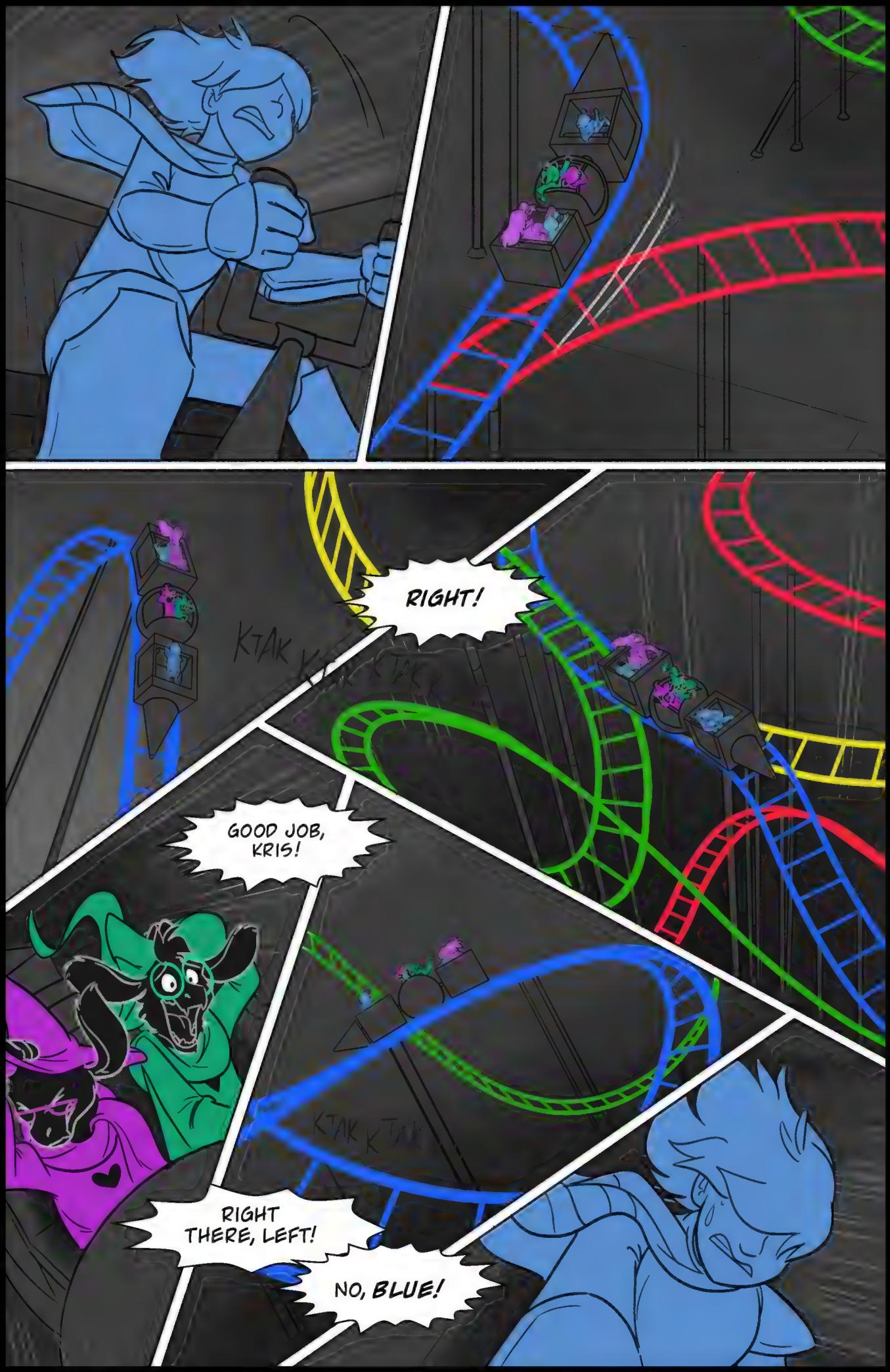
FWOOOM!
SUN COASTER!
THE COASTER? WELL, OF COURSE IT COULDN'T BE THAT SIMPLE...
WHY ARE WE SUDDENLY AT IWERKSLAND?
HONESTLY, DOESN'T ANYONE IN YOUR FUN GANG KNOW ANYTHING?!
WE ARE COMPLETELY NEW TO THIS LAND. PERHAPS YOU COULD EXPLAIN THE RULES HERE?

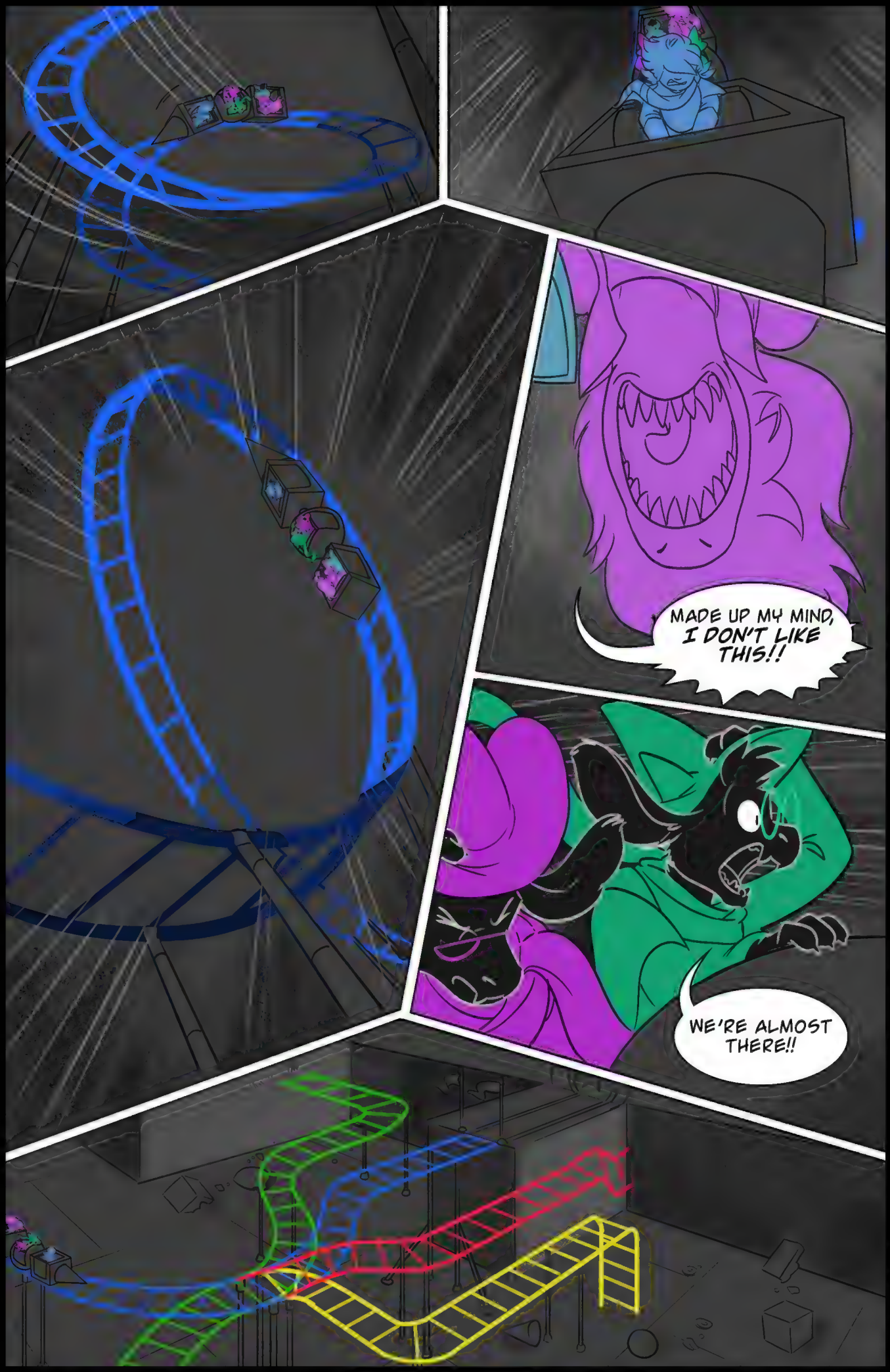
THE WHITESTONE ISLES ARE CONTROLLED BY PUZZLES. YOU MUST SOLVE THE PUZZLE OF EACH ISLAND TO BE TELEPORTED TO ANOTHER, ALTHOUGH YOUR EXACT DESTINATION IS ALMOST NEVER KNOWN.
SO THE ONLY WAY TO GET AROUND HERE IS TO JUST GET RANDOMLY TELEPORTED WHEREVER?!
YES.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE A BOAT?
ACROSS THE CONTAMINATED OCEAN?! ABSOLUTELY NOT!
THE OCEAN IS FULL OF DIRT, DISEASE AND GERMS! ONLY THE ISLANDS ARE SAFE!

SHEESH, HE WAS JUST ASKING!
GOOFY GRAPE IS KINDA MORE SOUR GRAPES, AIN'T HE?
SIGH...
COME ON, THIS WAY.
SO, WHO IS THE FUN GANG'S LEADER?


HMM, IF YOU SAY SO...
LUCKILY, THIS PUZZLE IS VERY SIMPLE.
JUST KEEP THE TRAIN ON THE BLUE TRACK, AND YOU'LL SOLVE IT.
WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'LL BE FUN!
I DUNNO IF I LIKE ROLLER COASTERS OR NOT.
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN ON ONE, SUSIE? ME NEITHER!

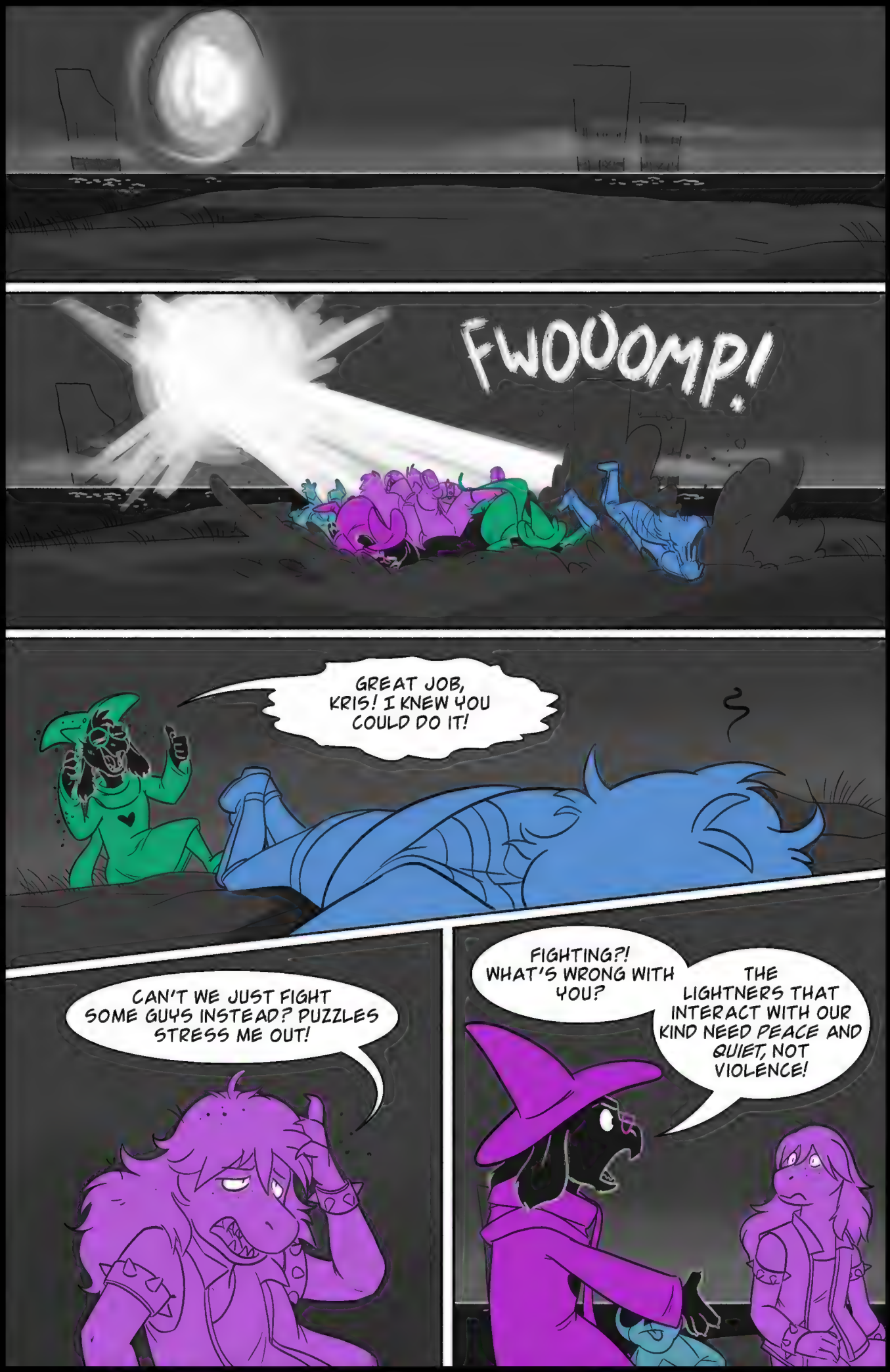

AM I SERIOUSLY THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN ON A—
KTIKTIKTIKTIK
FOOOOOOOSH
KTAK KTAK KTAK
LEFT!
NO, THE BLUE ONE!
SHUT UP, THAT IS BLUE!!


RIGHT!
KTAK
GOOD JOB, KRIS!
KTAK KTAK
RIGHT THERE, LEFT!
NO, BLUE!

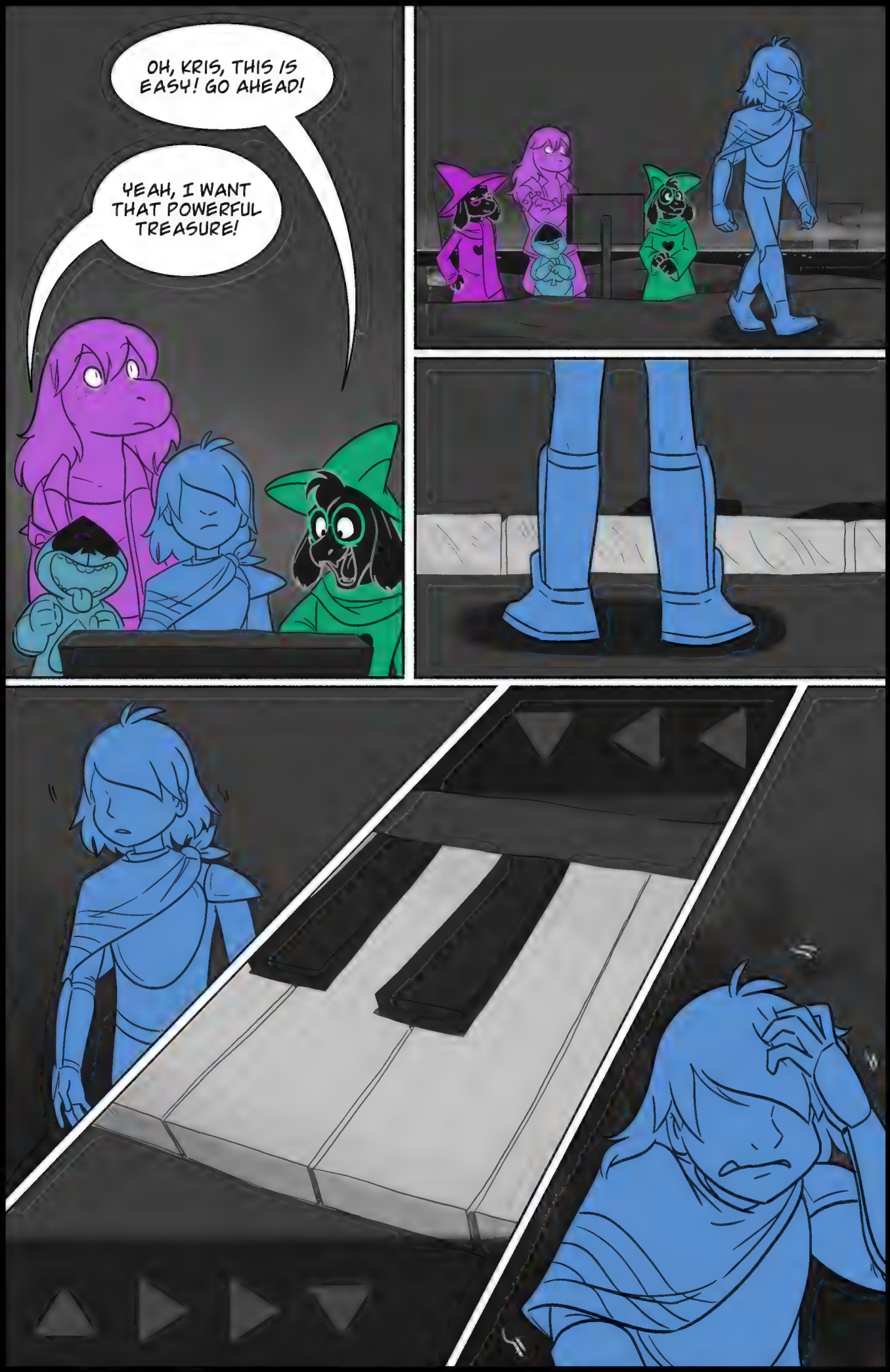

MADE UP MY MIND, I DON'T LIKE THIS!!
WE'RE ALMOST THERE!!

HEY KRIS, MOST OF THOSE OPTIONS ARE SQUISHY DEATH!!
SO DON'T SCREW UP!!
KTAK
KTAK
KTAK
KTAK

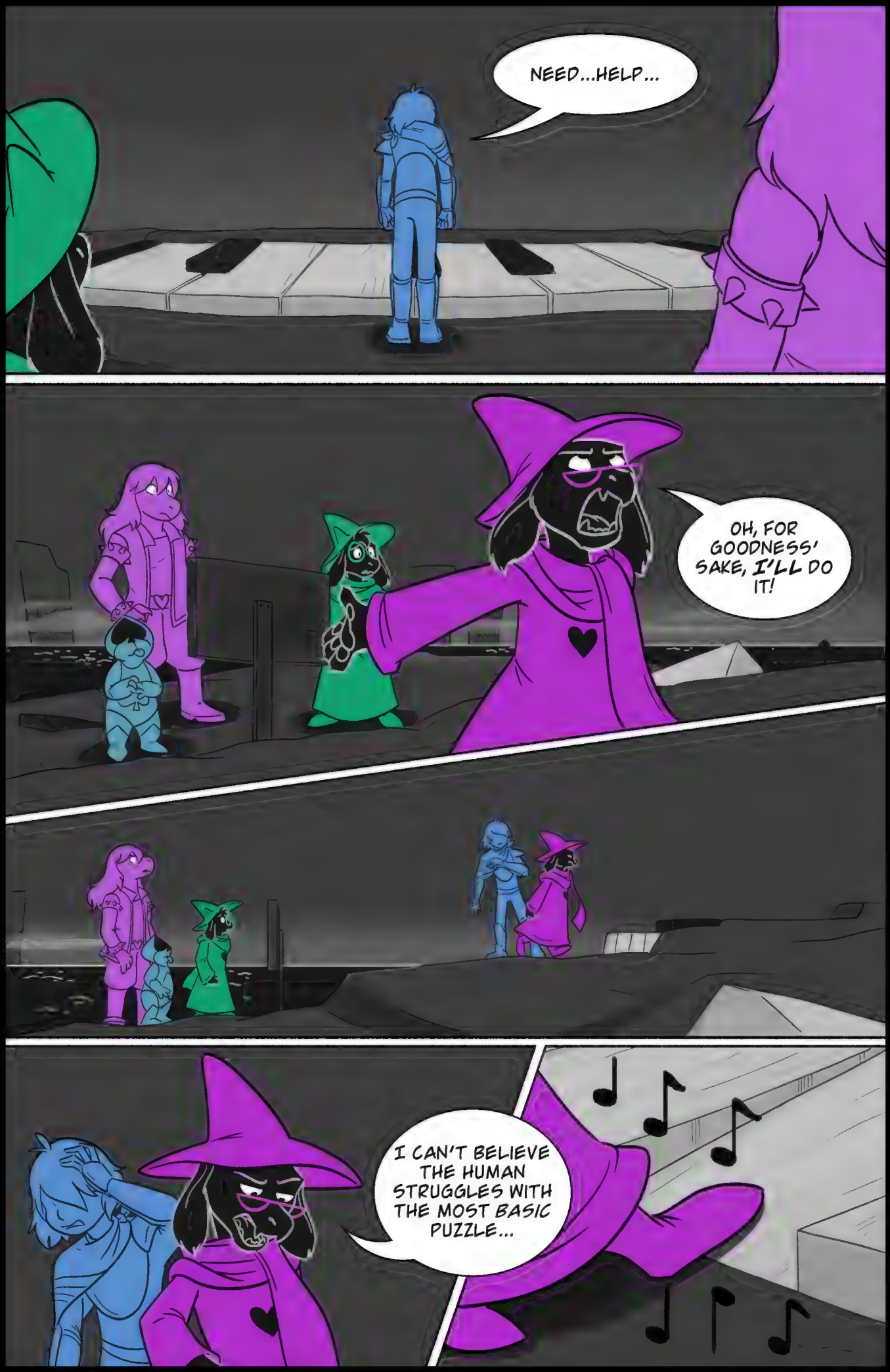
KTAK K TAK K TAK KTAK
GOAL!
FWOOOOM!
GOAL!
GOAL!

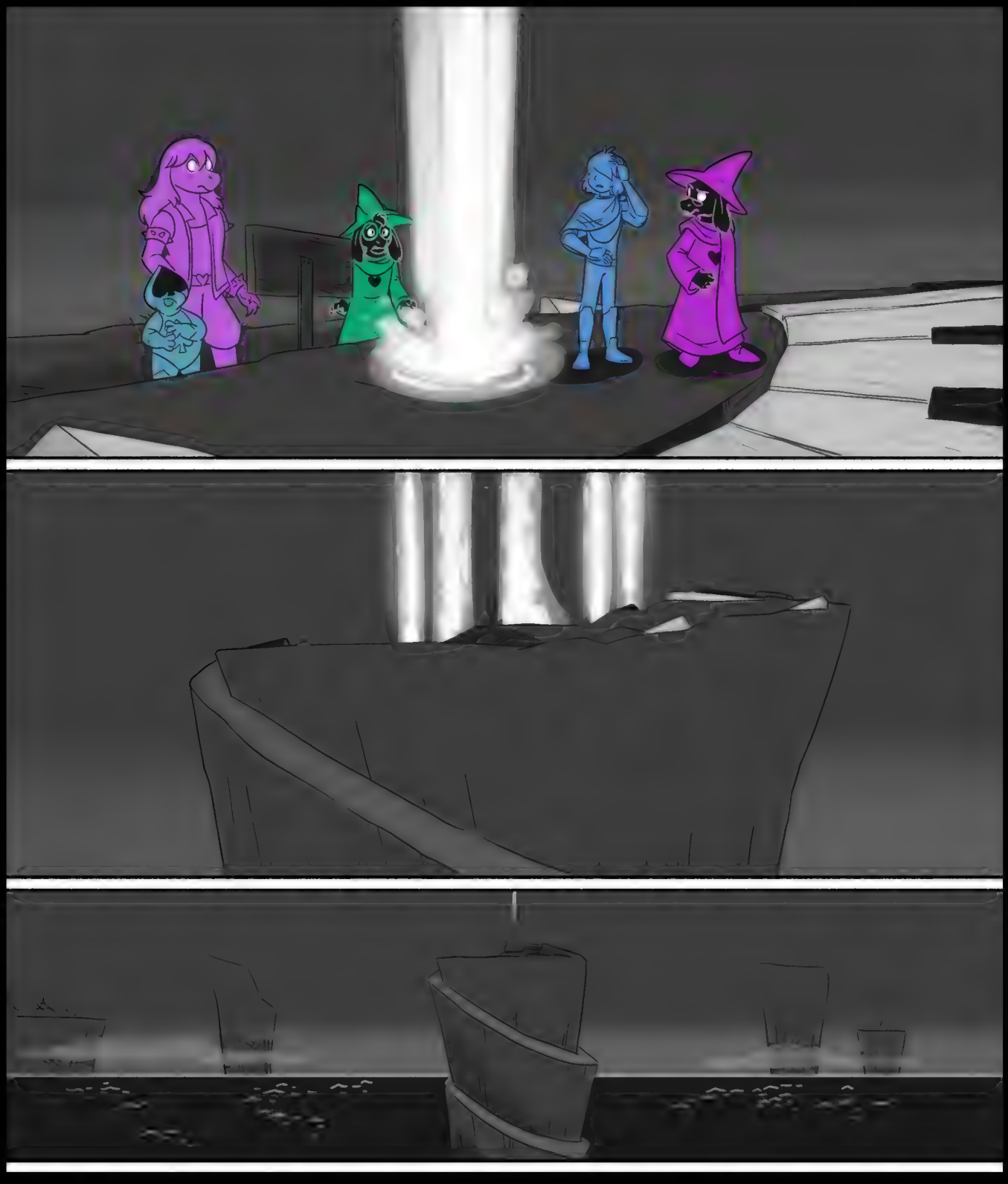

FWOOOMP!
GREAT JOB, KRIS! I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT!
CAN'T WE JUST FIGHT SOME GUYS INSTEAD? PUZZLES STRESS ME OUT!
FIGHTING?! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
THE LIGHTNERS THAT INTERACT WITH OUR KIND NEED PEACE AND QUIET, NOT VIOLENCE!

...HOSPITALS SUCK.
ARE WE THERE YET, GOOFY GRAPE?
NO, SHORT... MAN.
BUT LUCKILY FOR YOU, THIS IS THE EASIEST PUZZLE IN THE WHITESTONE ISLES.
PLAY ANY SIX NOTES TO ADVANCE
PLAY THE SONG YOU ALWAYS PLAY FOR A POWERFUL TREASURE


OH, KRIS, THIS IS EASY! GO AHEAD!
YEAH, I WANT THAT POWERFUL TREASURE!

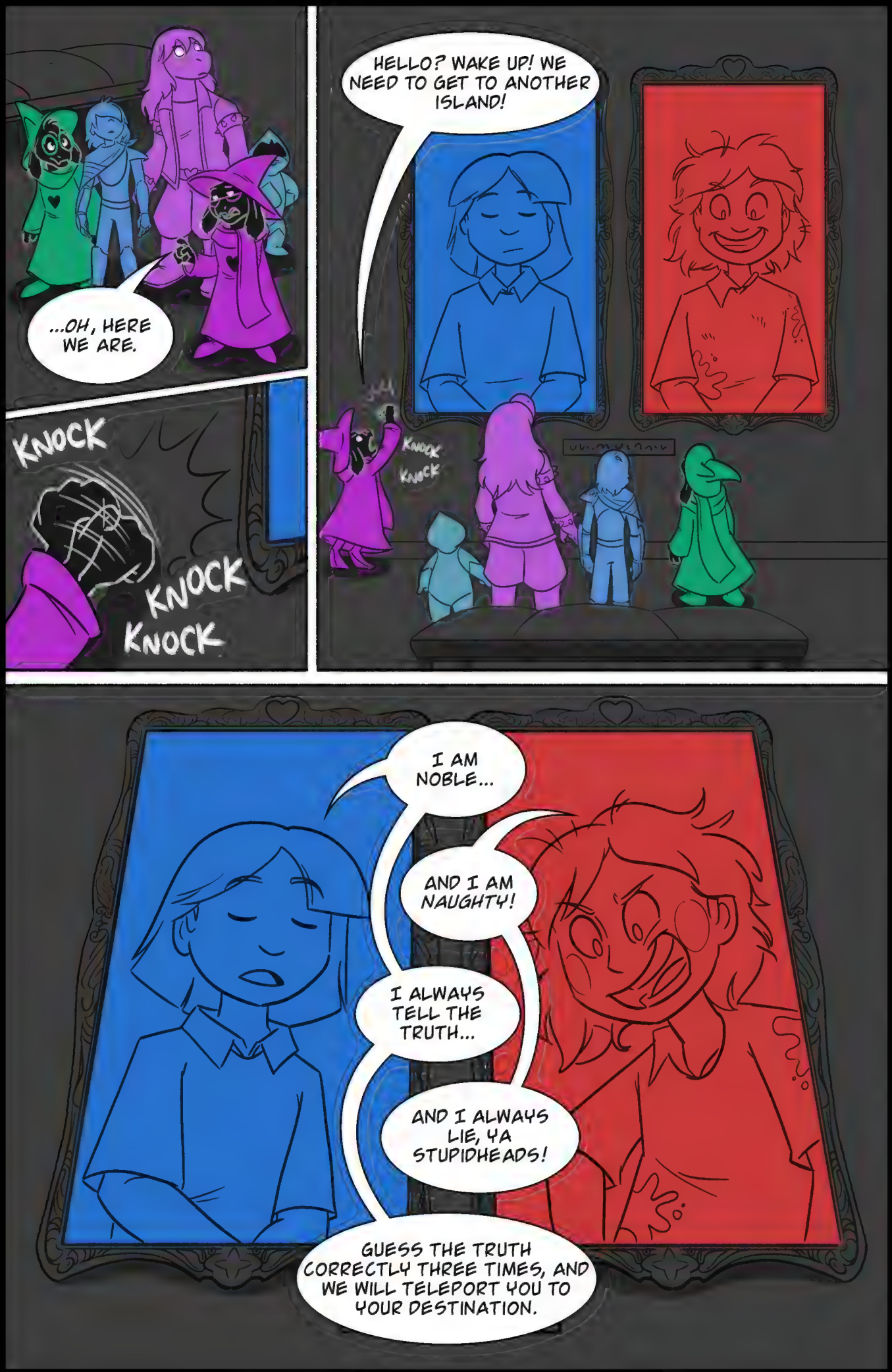
KRIS, WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?
THEY...I... DON'T...
DIDN'T THAT RECEPTIONIST SAY YOU PLAYED THE PIANO?
COME OOOON, I WANNA SEE THE COOL TREASURE!
DON'T... KNOW...
JUST RELAX, KRIS! YOU'LL GET IT!


NEED...HELP...
OH, FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, I'LL DO IT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE HUMAN STRUGGLES WITH THE MOST BASIC PUZZLE...

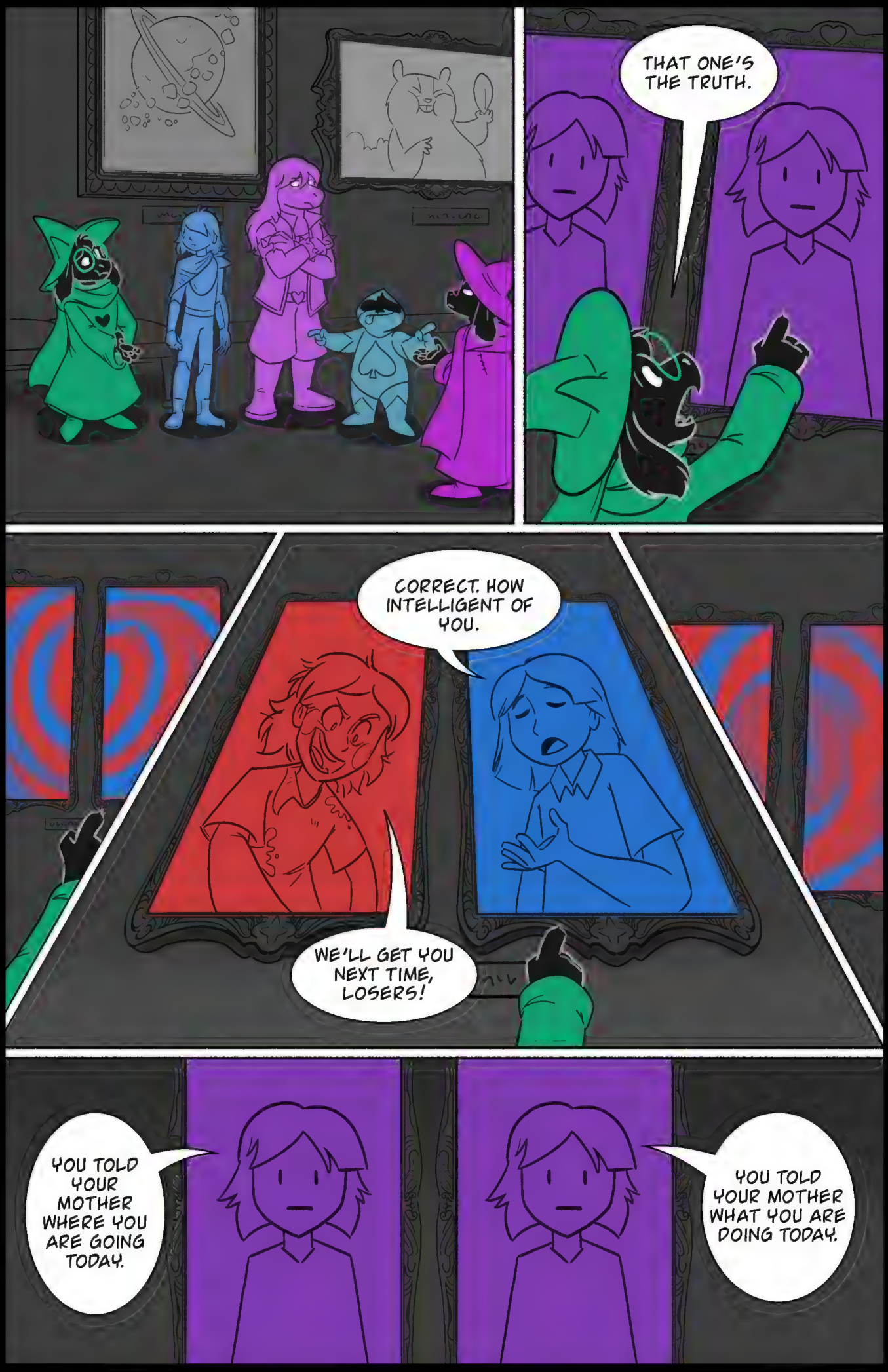


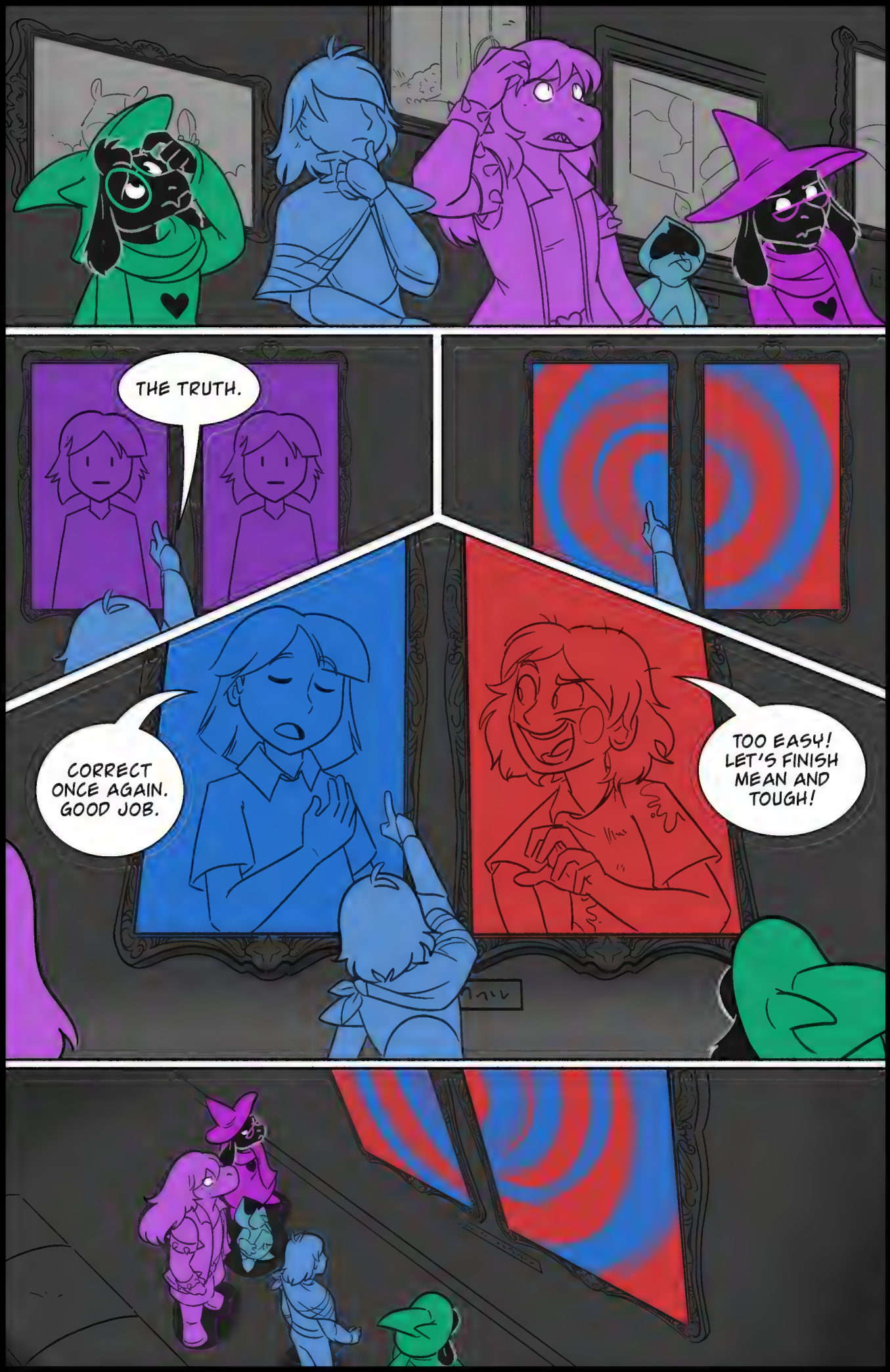
FWOOOOM
MEMORY GAME!
UGH...STILL NOT THERE YET...
IRALES...CAN'T YOU STAND TO BE A LITTLE NICER TO KRIS?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT HUMANS OR LIGHTNERS, BUT KRIS IS TRYING VERY HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

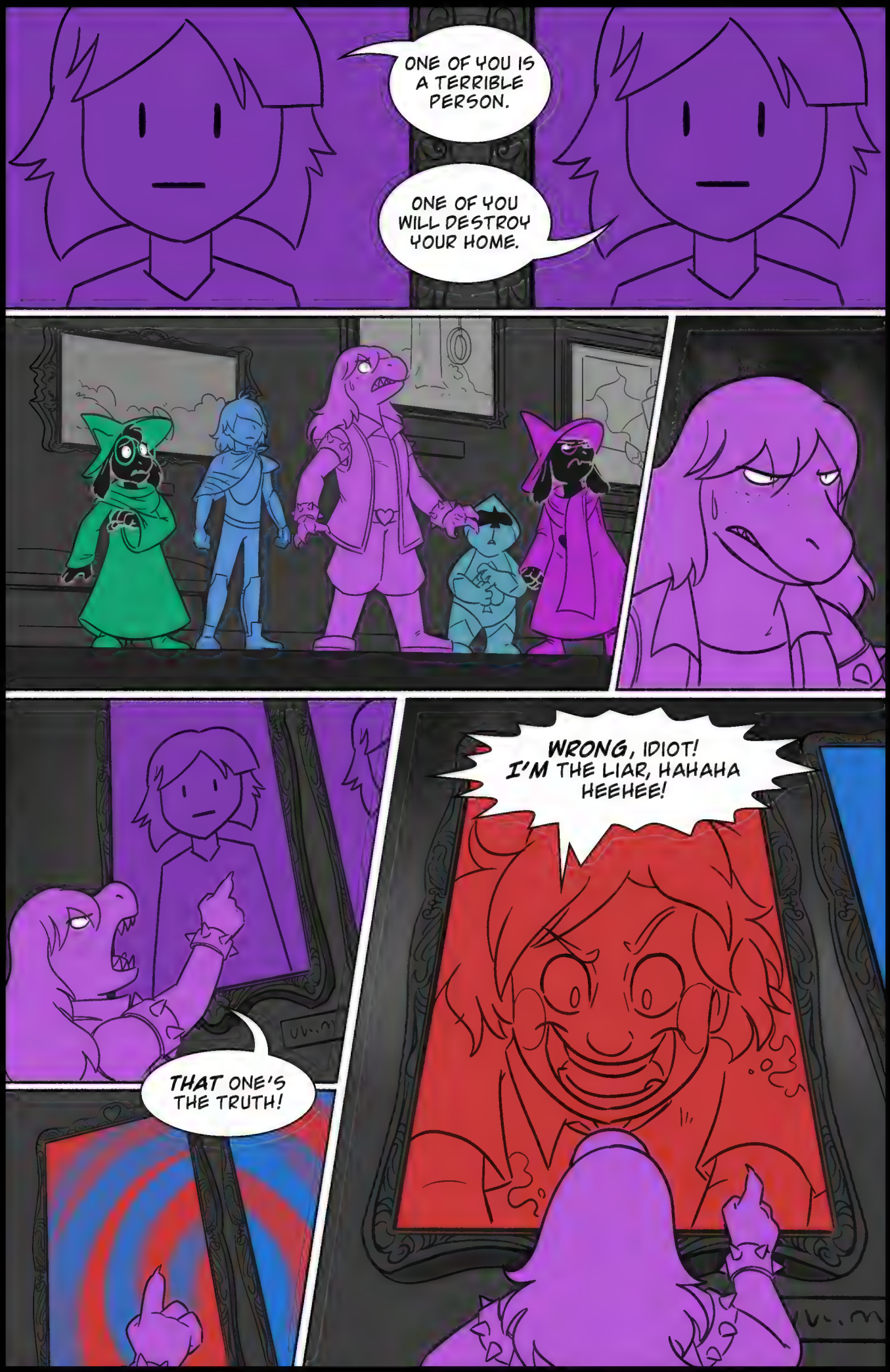
I TOLD YOU, I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING. I'M JUDGING ONLY BY WHAT I SEE HERE AND NOW.
SO WHAT THE HELL IS THIS PUZZLE?
THE HIGHLIGHT GALLERY. AND LIKE MOST ART, THE PUZZLE HERE IS... SUBJECTIVE.
AHH, HMM... NOPE...
NO, NO... HMM...


...OH, HERE WE ARE.
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
HELLO? WAKE UP! WE NEED TO GET TO ANOTHER ISLAND!
KNOCK
KNOCK
I AM NOBLE...
AND I AM NAUGHTY!
I ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH...
AND I ALWAYS LIE, YA STUPIDHEADS!
GUESS THE TRUTH CORRECTLY THREE TIMES, AND WE WILL TELEPORT YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION.

WOOOW, I WONDER WHICH TALKING PAINTING IS GONNA TELL THE TRUTH!
NOW IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE.
...OF COURSE.
THERE IS A KING PRESENT.
THERE IS A PRINCE PRESENT.


THAT ONE'S THE TRUTH.
CORRECT. HOW INTELLIGENT OF YOU.
WE'LL GET YOU NEXT TIME, LOSERS!
YOU TOLD YOUR MOTHER WHERE YOU ARE GOING TODAY.
YOU TOLD YOUR MOTHER WHAT YOU ARE DOING TODAY.


THE TRUTH.
CORRECT ONCE AGAIN. GOOD JOB.
TOO EASY! LET'S FINISH MEAN AND TOUGH!


ONE OF YOU IS A TERRIBLE PERSON.
ONE OF YOU WILL DESTROY YOUR HOME.
THAT ONE'S THE TRUTH!
WRONG, IDIOT! I'M THE LIAR, HAHAHA HEEHEE!

WHAT?! BUT THAT'S—
TWO OUT OF THREE ISN'T TOO BAD...
...SO WE'LL GET YOU MOSTLY THERE, HEEHEE!
FWOO
OOM

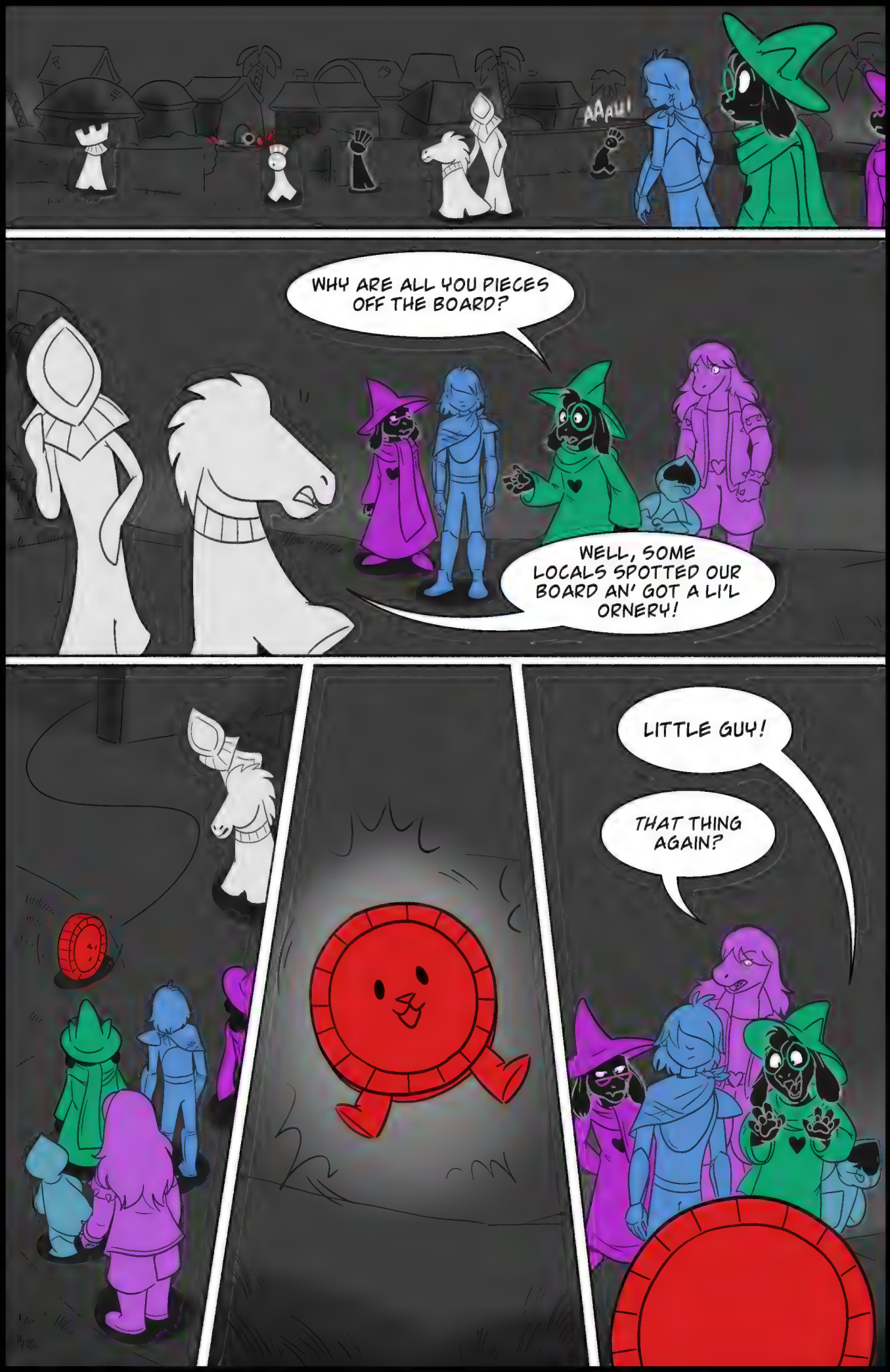
FWOOOM!
WHH—!

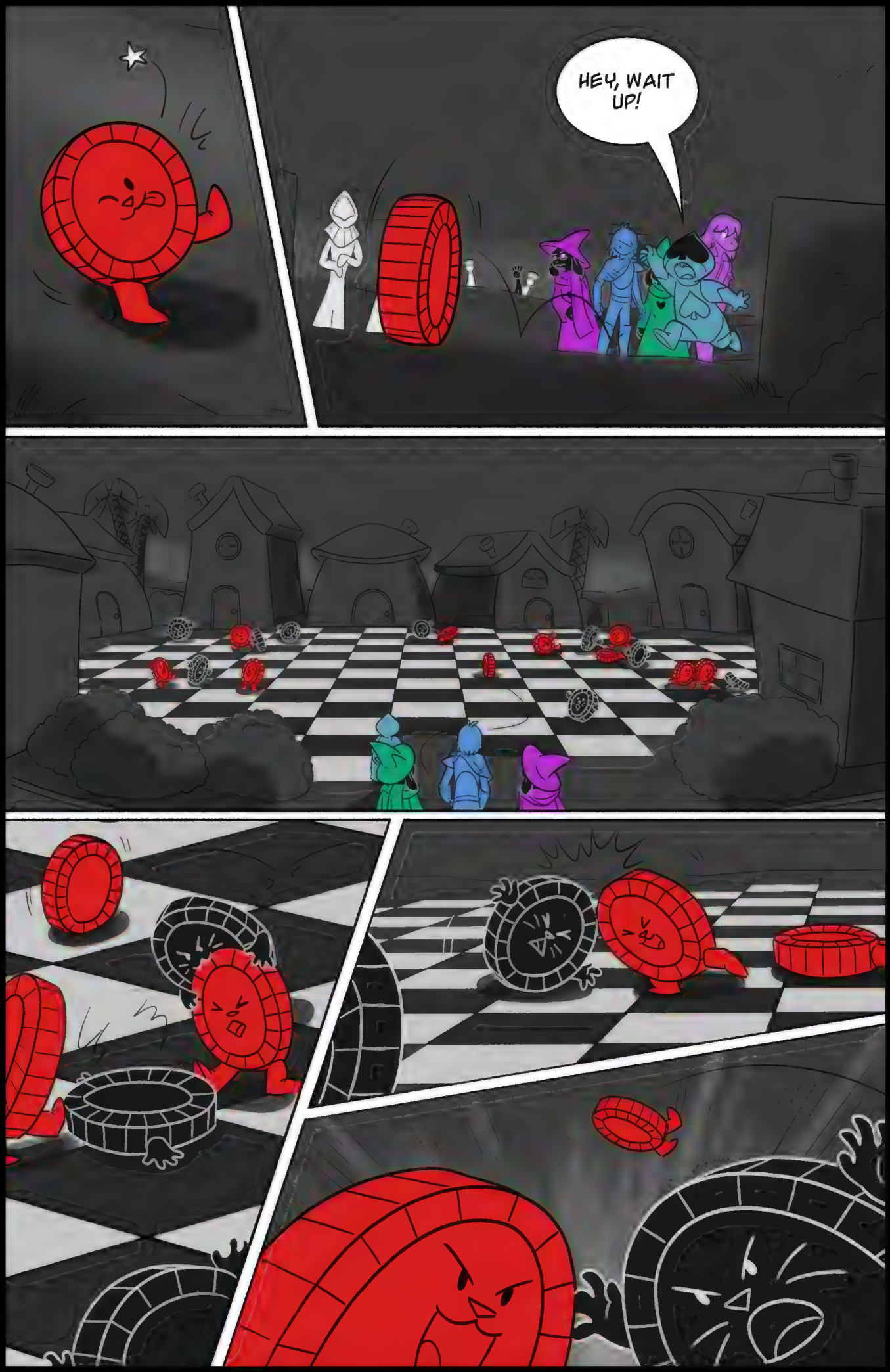
WAAAAH-
GHHK!
HANG ON!!

OOOF!
THAT WAS...WAY TOO CLOSE...
WOW, GOOD JOB SAVING US!
I...SHOULD'VE BEEN FASTER...

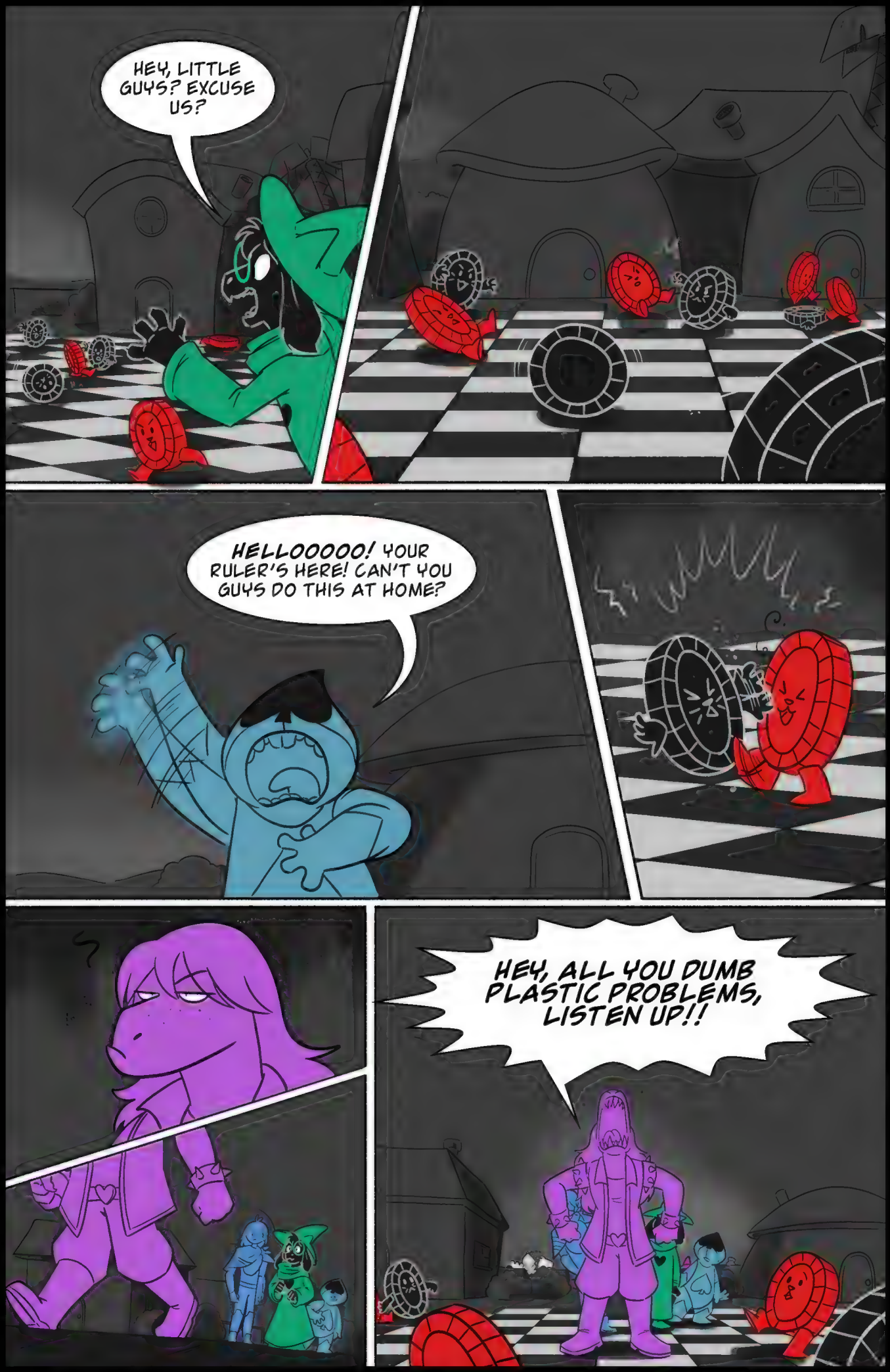
AND THEY WONDER WHY NO ONE WANTS TO VISIT HIGHLIGHT GALLERY! HONESTLY, SUCH RUDENESS...
GHH!
WOOOAH THERE, LI'L DOGGIES! WE GOTSTA STICK TOGETHER!
HEY, WAIT UP, LOYAL SUBJECT WHOSE NAME I TOTALLY FORGOT!
WELL SADDLE ME UP, IT'S THE OL' GANG OF LIGHTNER HEROES, AT LAST!

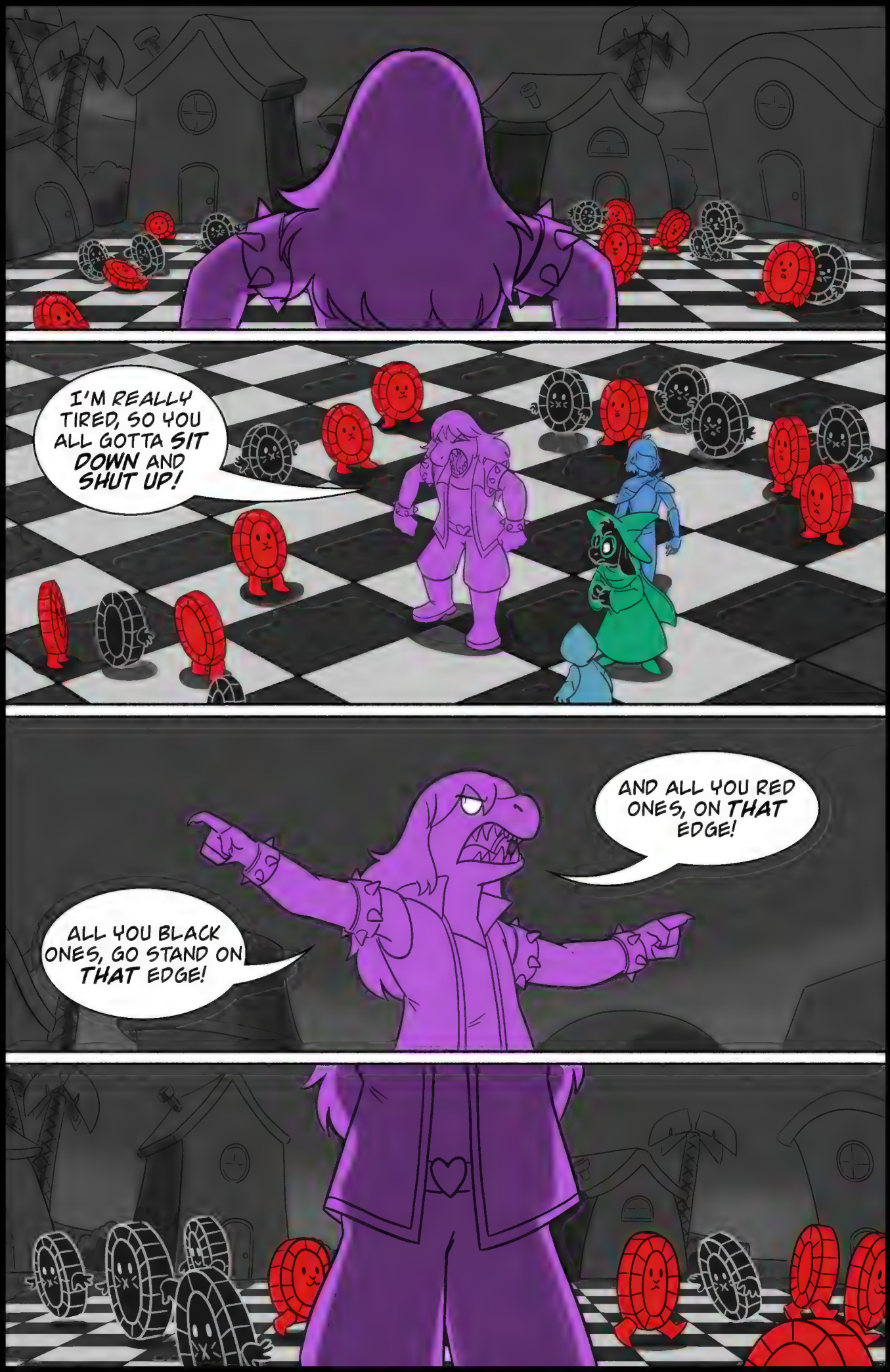
WE KNEW AFTER THE CALAMITY THAT YOU WOULD SOON BE ALONG TO RESCUE US.
WELL, THEY ALL KNEW, BUT I WASN'T COMPLETELY CONVINCED.
IS EVERYONE FROM THE GREAT BOARD ON THIS ISLAND?
YEEUP, ALL RUNNIN' AROUND HERE SOMEWHERES!
WE'VE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB OF KEEPING EVERYONE IN PERFECT ORDER!
AAAAH!!
AAAAAAAAH
ALL EXCEPT THE FRIGHTENED ONES. WHICH IS MOST EVERYONE.

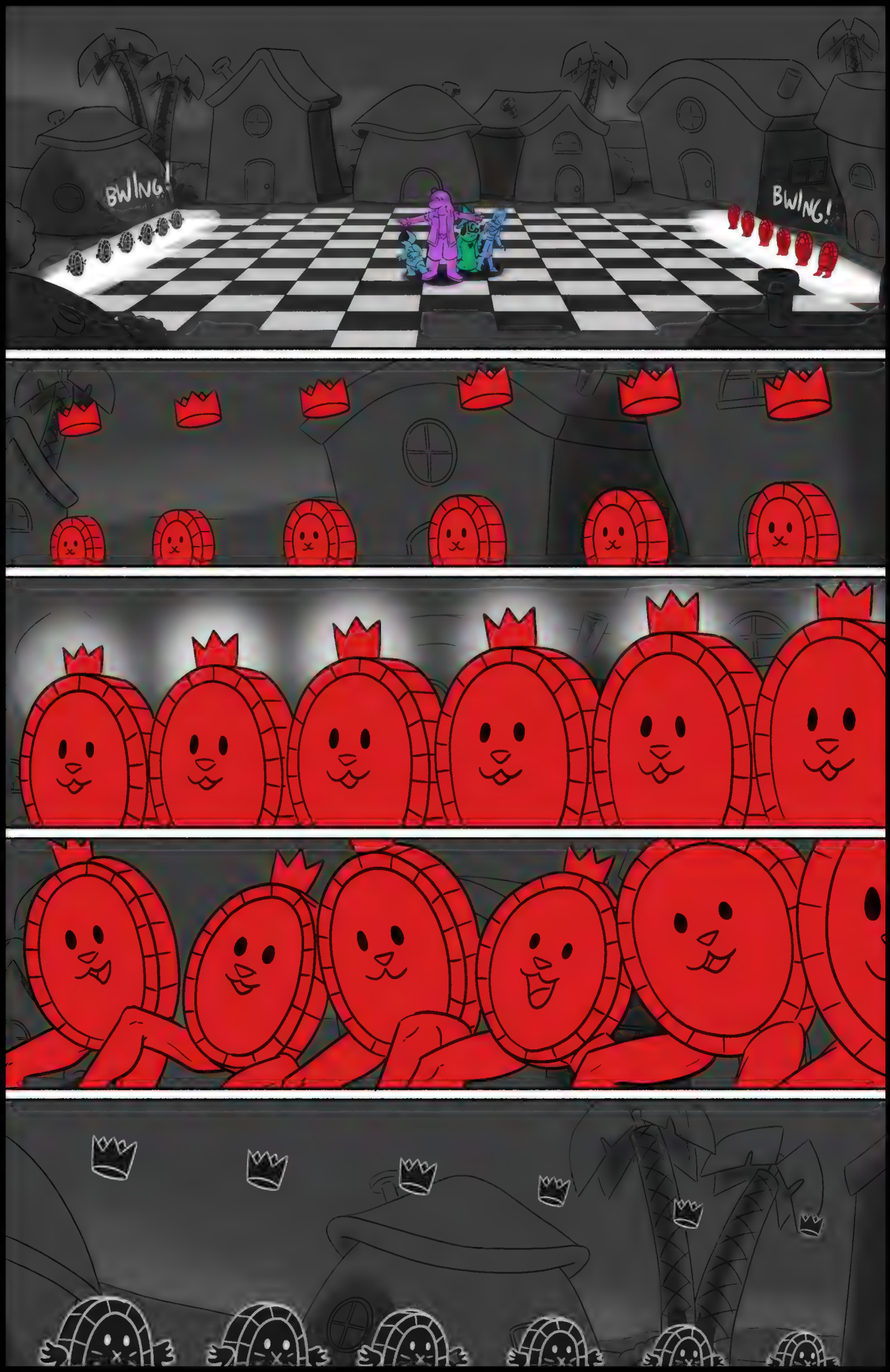

AAAU!
WHY ARE ALL YOU PIECES OFF THE BOARD?
WELL, SOME LOCALS SPOTTED OUR BOARD AN' GOT A LI'L ORNERY!
LITTLE GUY!
THAT THING AGAIN?

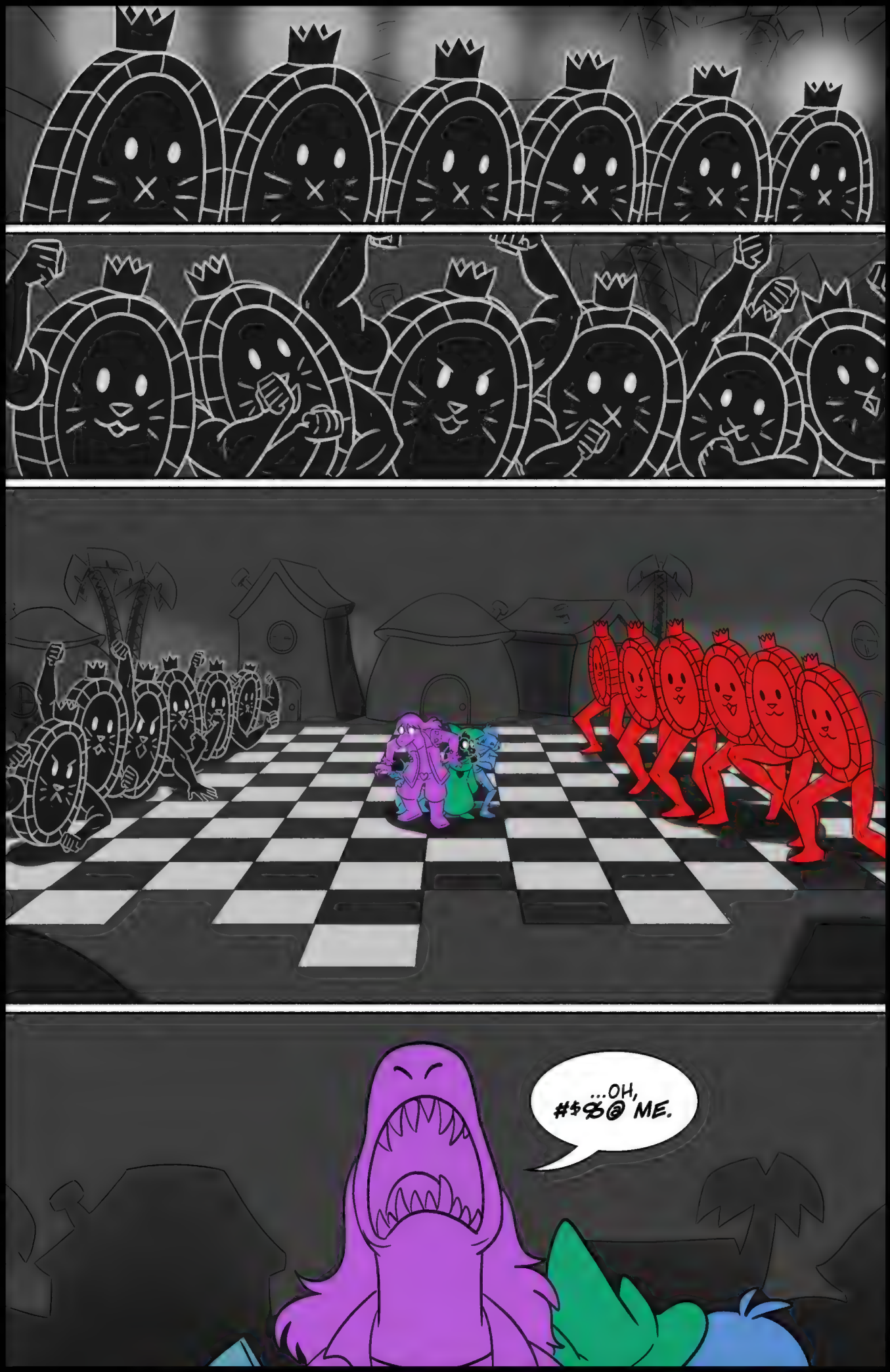

HEY, WAIT UP!

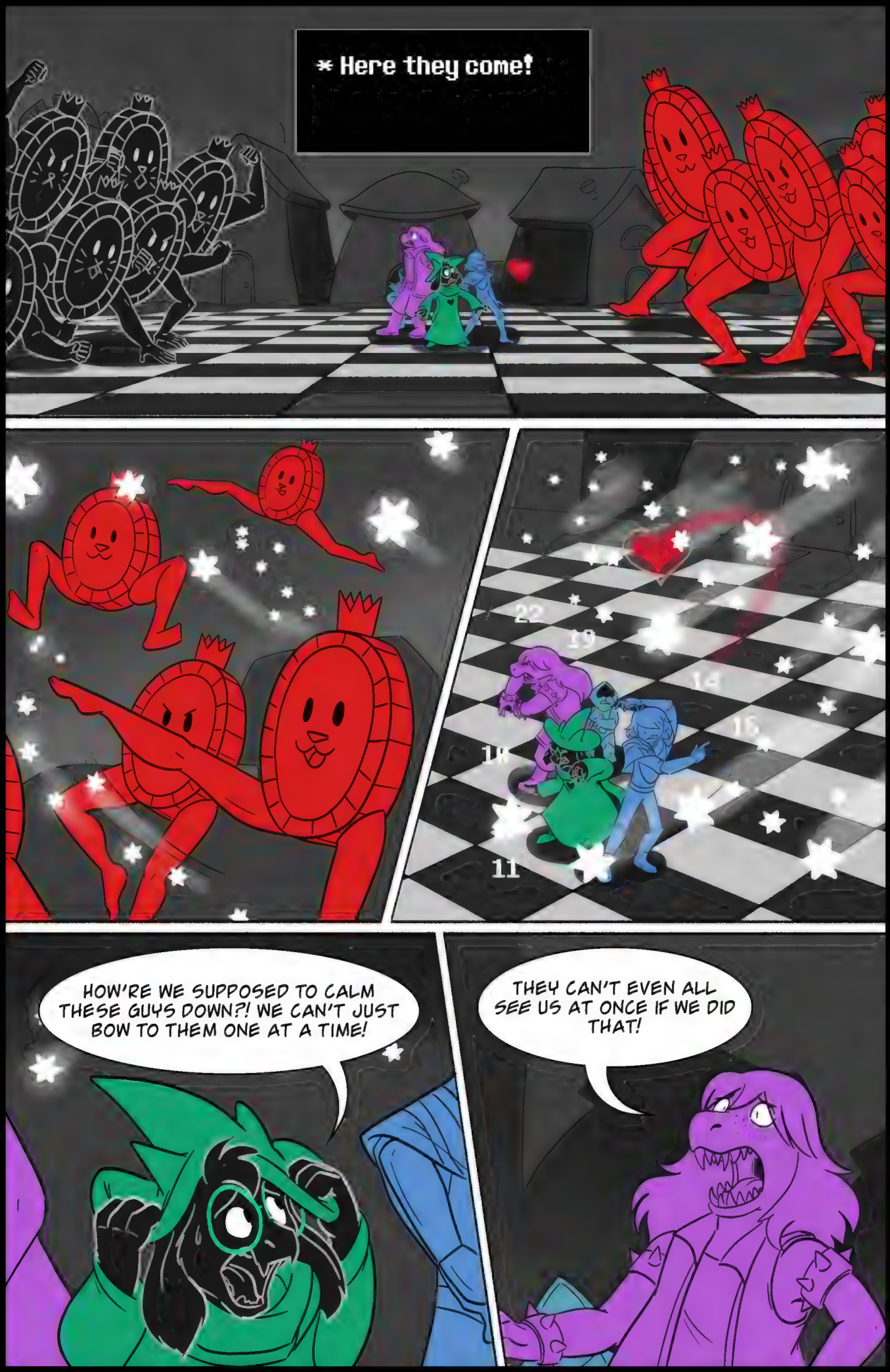
A...LOT OF LITTLE GUYS.
GASP!
HE FINALLY GETS TO BE AMONG HIS OWN KIND IN THE WILD!
BARBARIC.
WE WOULD HAVE ALL REMAINED ON THE BOARD CONDUCTING OURSELVES WITH CIVILITY, IF NOT FOR THIS HOSTILE TAKEOVER.
IF WE CAN JUST GET EVERYONE CALM AND ORGANIZED...WE'LL BE READY TO LEAVE.
WELL THEN, HURRY UP AND GET TO ORGANIZING THEM!

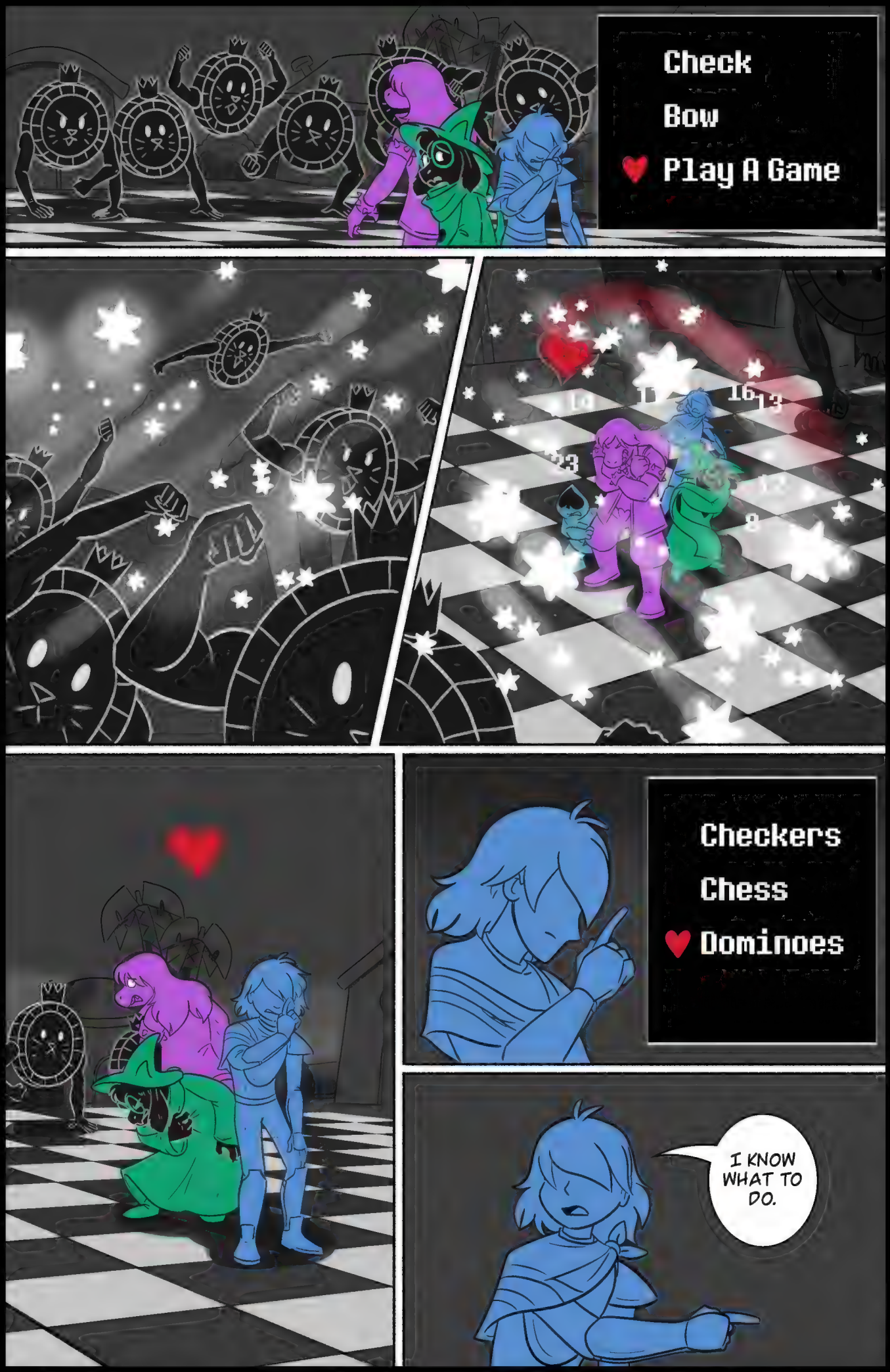

HEY, LITTLE GUYS? EXCUSE US?
HELLOOOOO! YOUR RULER'S HERE! CAN'T YOU GUYS DO THIS AT HOME?
HEY, ALL YOU DUMB PLASTIC PROBLEMS, LISTEN UP!!


I'M REALLY TIRED, SO YOU ALL GOTTA SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP!
AND ALL YOU RED ONES, ON THAT EDGE!
ALL YOU BLACK ONES, GO STAND ON THAT EDGE!


BWING!
BWING!

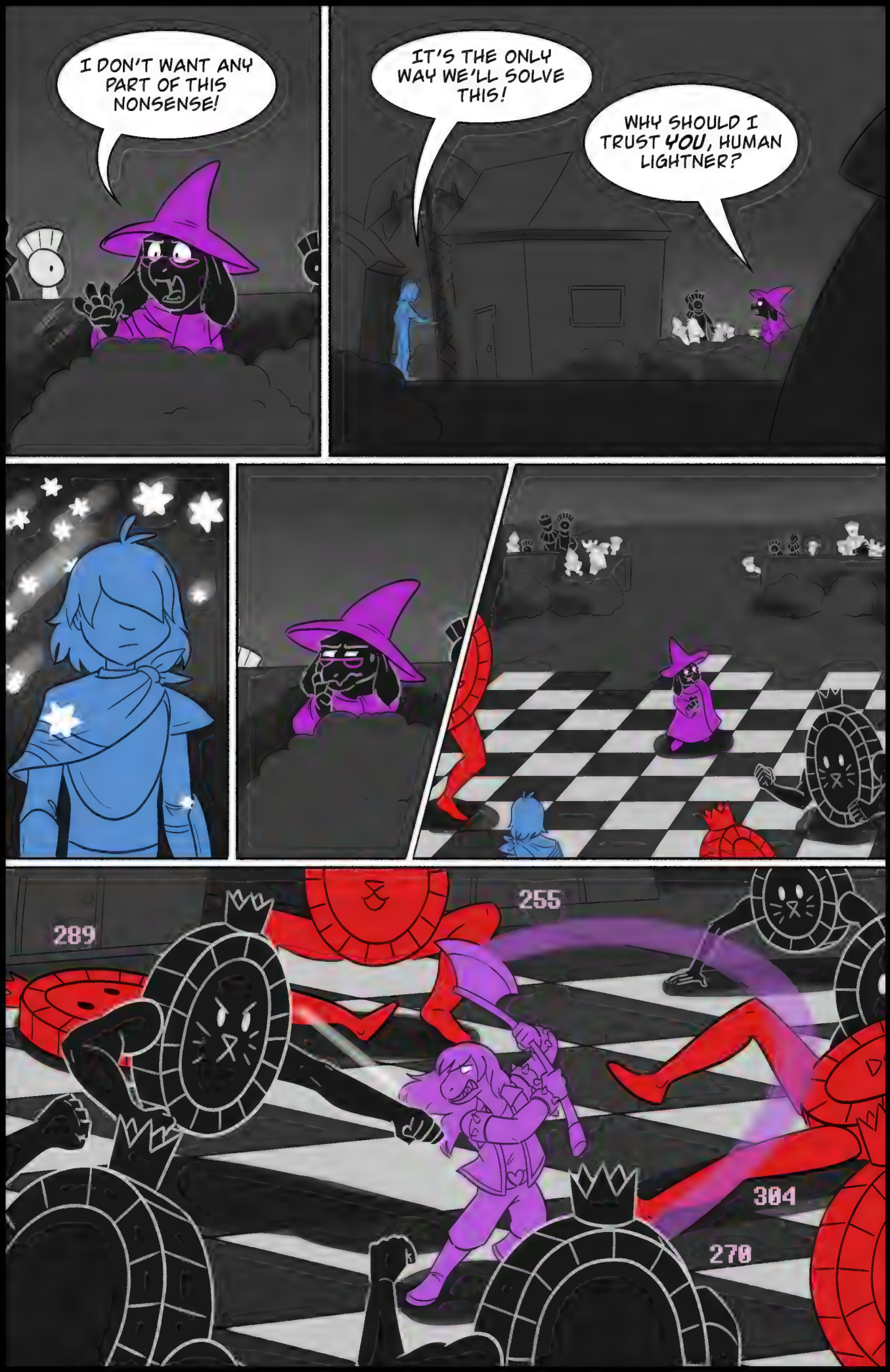

...OH, #$@ ME.


* Here they come!
22
19
14
16
18
11
HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED TO CALM THESE GUYS DOWN?! WE CAN'T JUST BOW TO THEM ONE AT A TIME!
THEY CAN'T EVEN ALL SEE US AT ONCE IF WE DID THAT!


Check
Bow
Play A Game
Checkers
Chess
Dominoes
I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

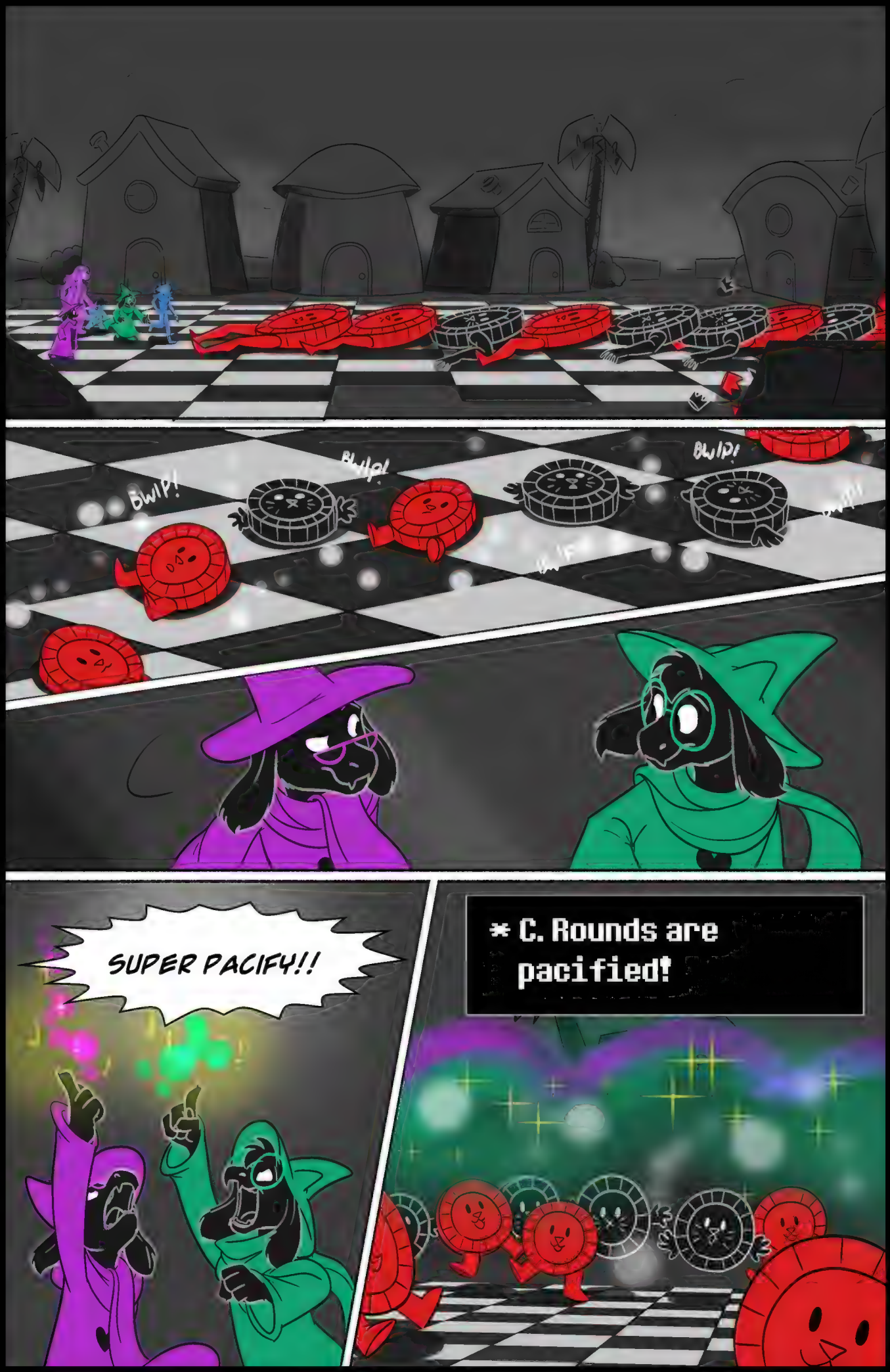
START ATTACKING THEM.
WHAT?!
BUT LAST TIME ATTACKING IT JUST MADE IT STRONGER!
JUST GO NUTS.
IF YOU SAY SO!
RAAAAHHH!!

103
112
115
129
AAAAHH!!
109
120
160
134
9
12
11
10
12
RALSEI, GET READY TO PACIFY.
YOU GOT IT!
WE'LL NEED YOUR HELP, TOO.


I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF THIS NONSENSE!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE'LL SOLVE THIS!
WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU, HUMAN LIGHTNER?
289
255
304
270

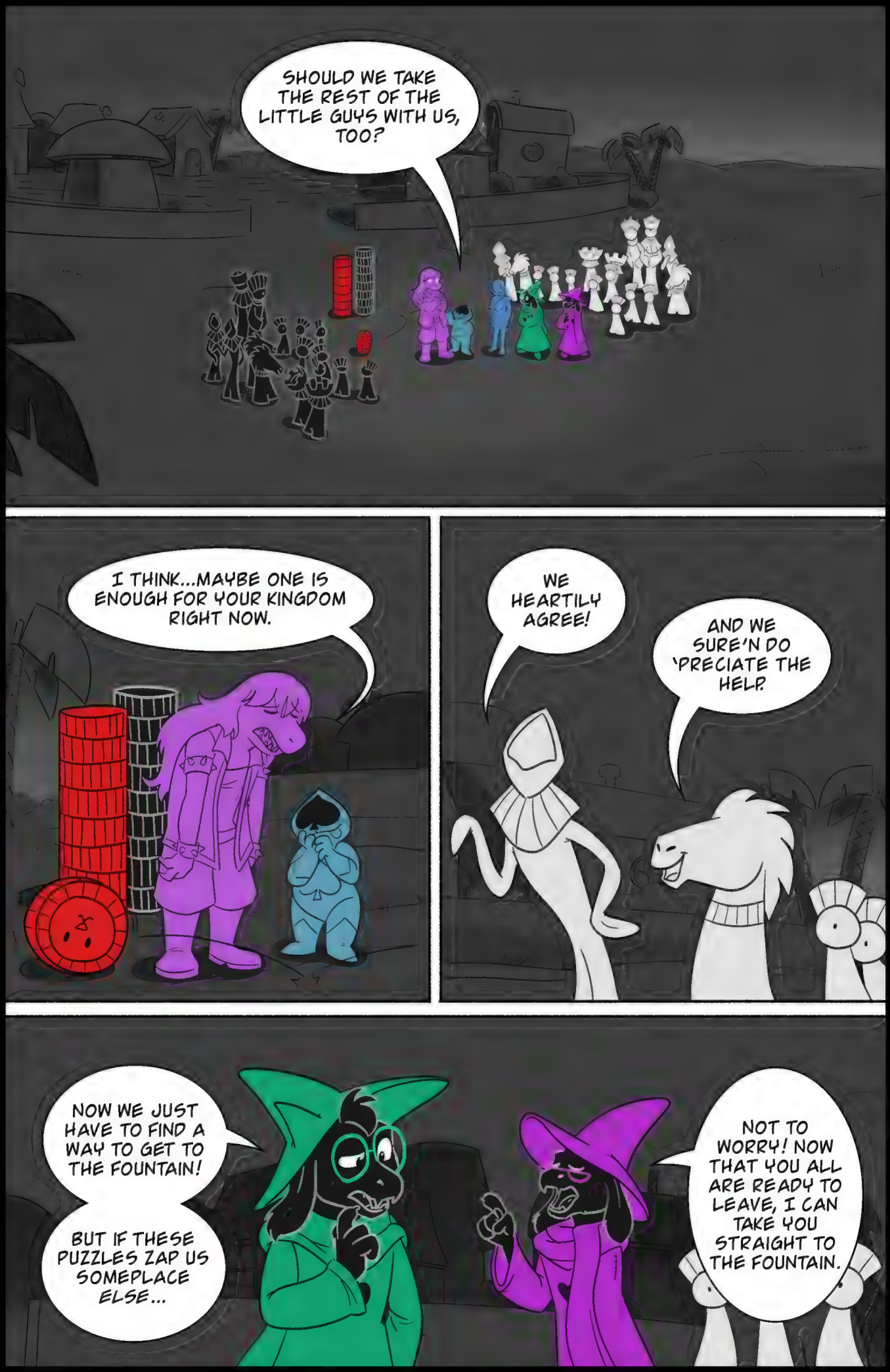
HOW MUCH LONGER AM I DOING THIS?!
298
MILK ALMOND
* Self-care break time!
MILK ALMOND

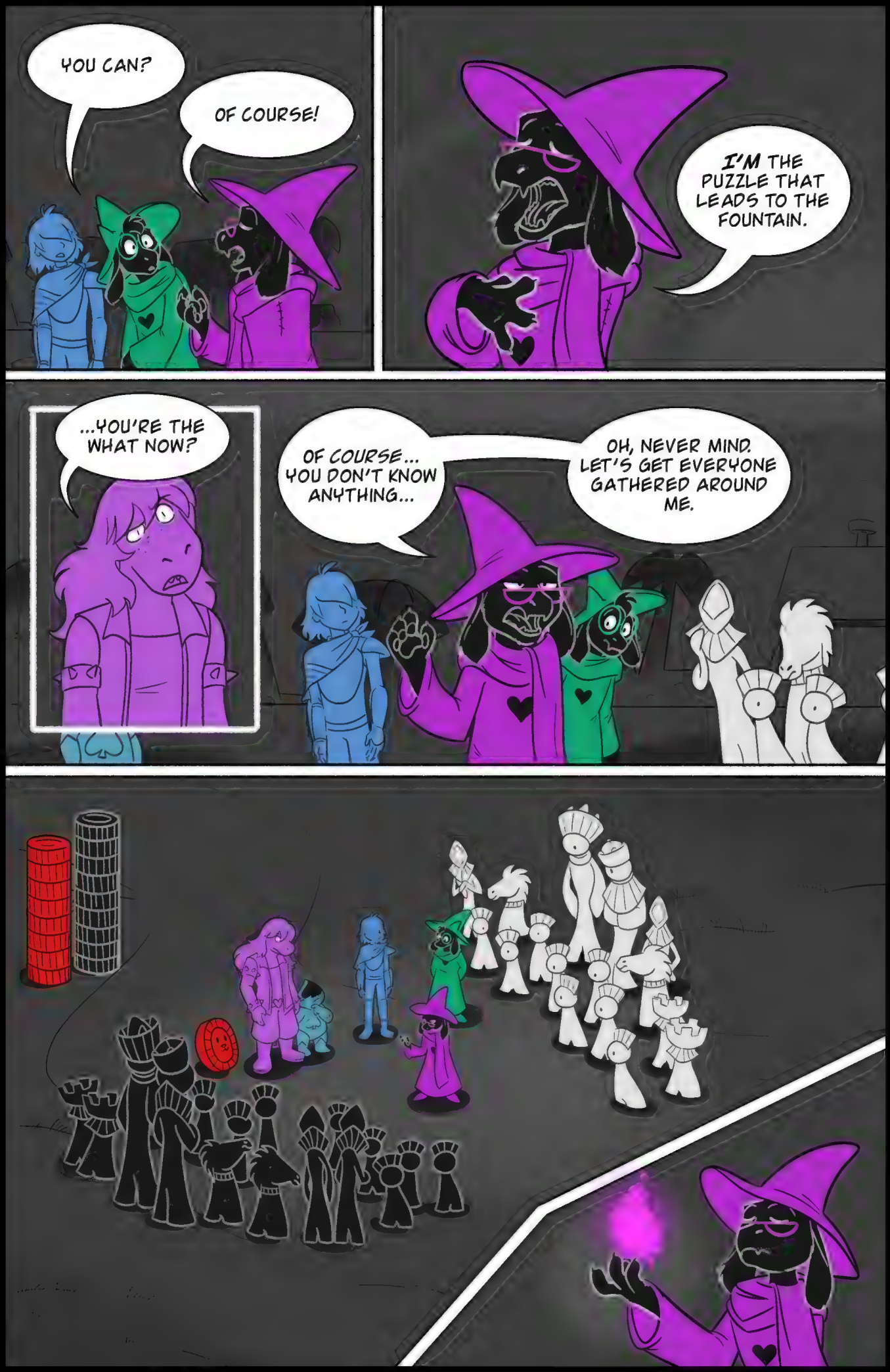
MILK
ALMOND
TINK!
K-TINK!
K-TINK!
K-TINK!
K-TINK!

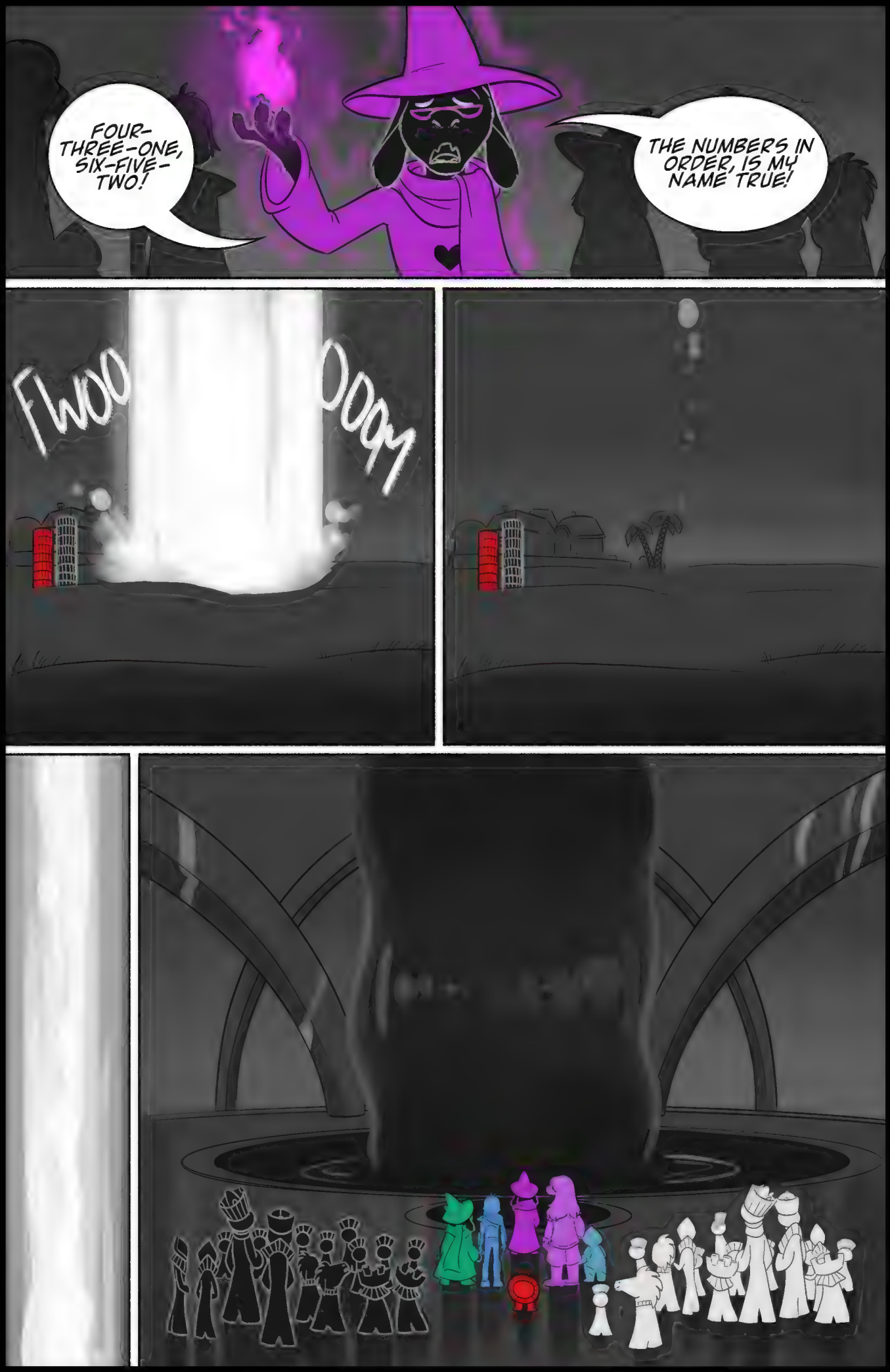

BWIP!
BWIP!
BWIP!
SUPER PACIFY!!
* C. Rounds are pacified!

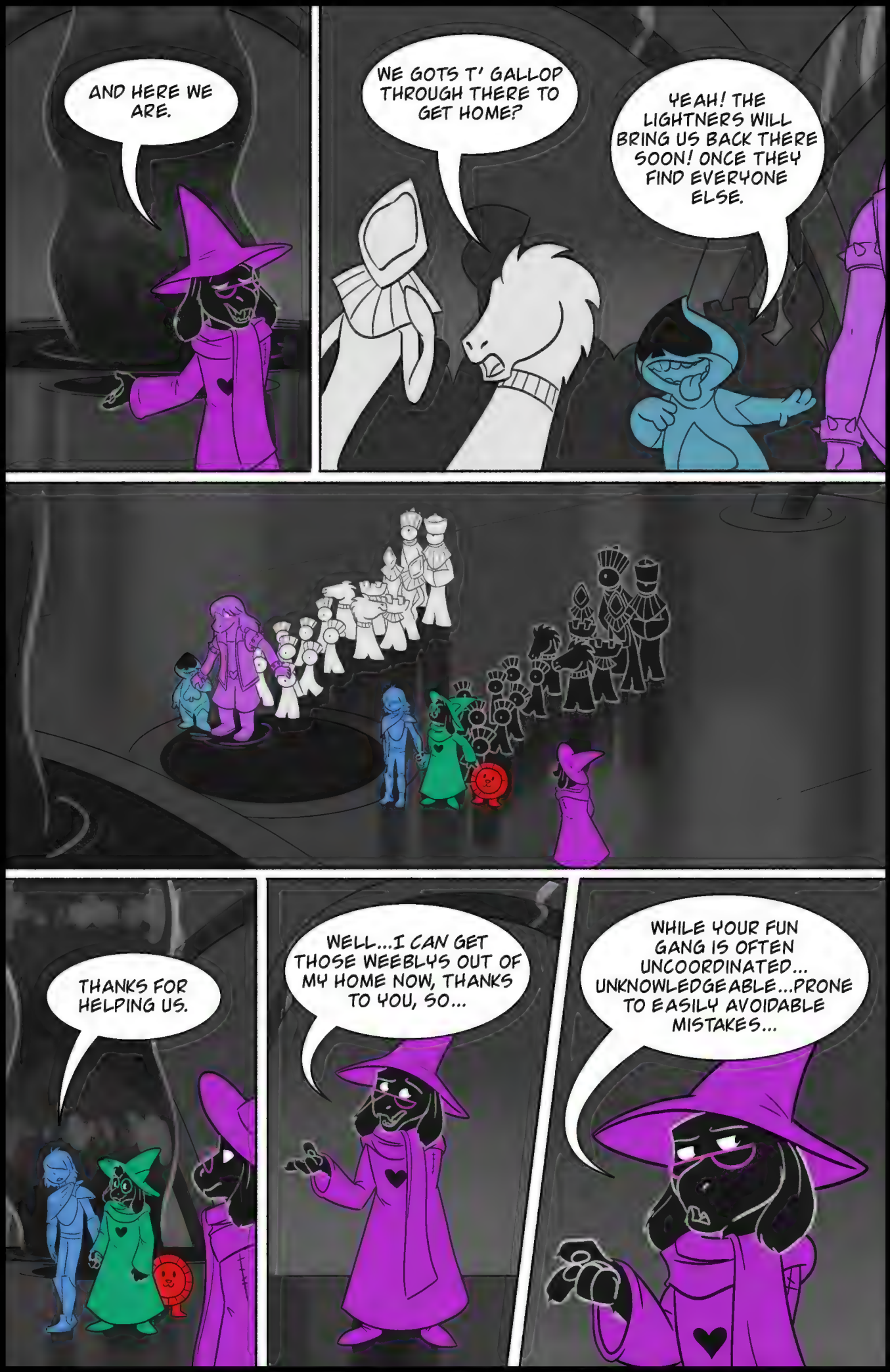
TINK!
TINK!
TINK!
* You won!
YAAY!
URRAH!
HURRAY!
SUCCESS!
YOU DID IT!
OUTSTANDING!
YAAAY
HUZZAH!
YEEAH!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WORKED!
ME NEITHER.

THAT WAS... UNCONVENTIONAL, BUT IMPRESSIVE.
PERHAPS YOU ARE ALL RIGHT AS A LEADER FOR THE FUN GANG.
SEE? I TOLD YOU TO HAVE FAITH IN THEM!


SHOULD WE TAKE THE REST OF THE LITTLE GUYS WITH US, TOO?
I THINK...MAYBE ONE IS ENOUGH FOR YOUR KINGDOM RIGHT NOW.
WE HEARTILY AGREE!
AND WE SURE'N DO 'PRECIATE THE HELP.
NOW WE JUST HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO GET TO THE FOUNTAIN!
BUT IF THESE PUZZLES ZAP US SOMEPLACE ELSE...
NOT TO WORRY! NOW THAT YOU ALL ARE READY TO LEAVE, I CAN TAKE YOU STRAIGHT TO THE FOUNTAIN.


YOU CAN?
OF COURSE!
I'M THE PUZZLE THAT LEADS TO THE FOUNTAIN.
...YOU'RE THE WHAT NOW?
OF COURSE... YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING...
OH, NEVER MIND. LET'S GET EVERYONE GATHERED AROUND ME.

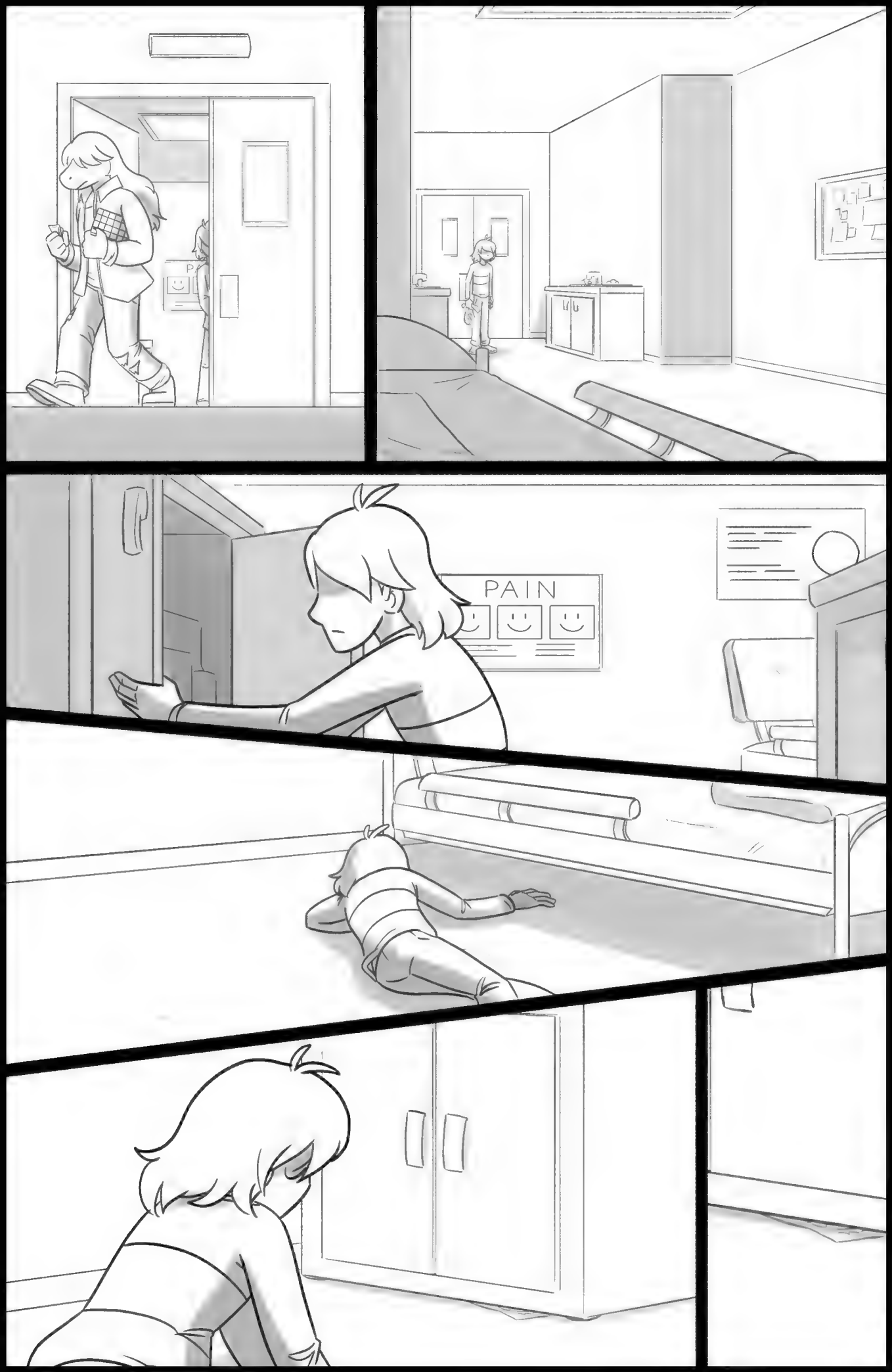

FOUR-THREE-ONE, SIX-FIVE-TWO!
THE NUMBERS IN ORDER, IS MY NAME TRUE!
Flwoo
oom


AND HERE WE ARE.
WE GOTS T' GALLOP THROUGH THERE TO GET HOME?
YEAH! THE LIGHTNERS WILL BRING US BACK THERE SOON! ONCE THEY FIND EVERYONE ELSE.
THANKS FOR HELPING US.
WELL...I CAN GET THOSE WEEBLYS OUT OF MY HOME NOW, THANKS TO YOU, SO...
WHILE YOUR FUN GANG IS OFTEN UNCOORDINATED... UNKNOWLEDGEABLE...PRONE TO EASILY AVOIDABLE MISTAKES...

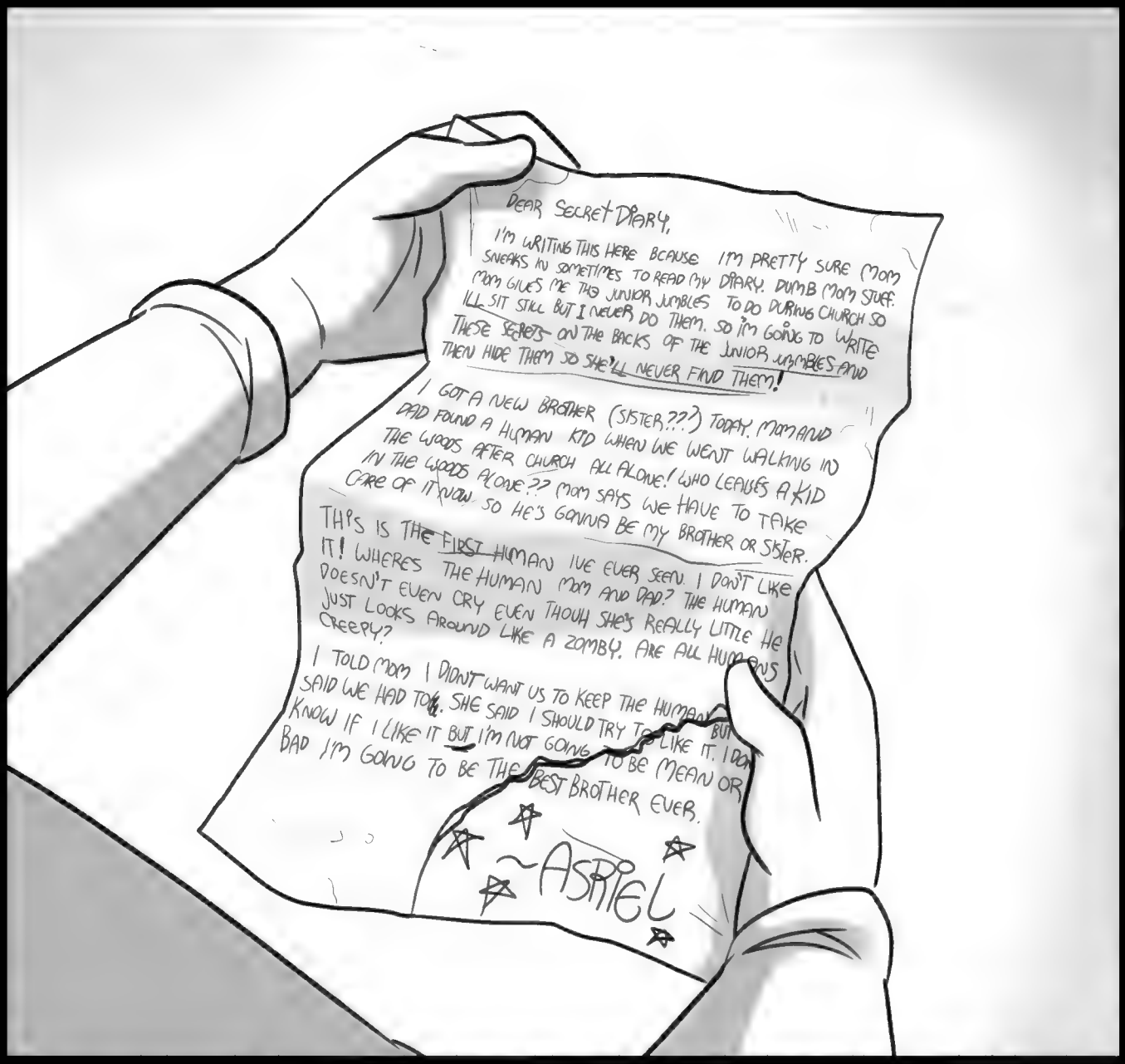
YOU DO MAKE PROGRESS AND PRODUCE RESULTS.
I AM CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT A HUMAN LIGHTNER LIKE YOU WILL DO NEXT.
ME TOO.

THUNK.
PAIN
WELL, THAT'S KINDA SUSPICIOUS.
AT LEAST WE FOUND ALL OF THESE GUYS.
YEAH...

GEEZ, MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE TWO IN ONE DAY.
I'M EXHAUSTED... AND SO HUNGRY...
THERE'S A VENDING MACHINE JUST OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL.
PAIN
OH, THANK GOD. I'LL GO GET US SNACKS, JUST MEET ME OUTSIDE.
UM...DO YOU... HAVE ANY MONEY?
THANKS.


PAIN

PAIN


DEAR SECRET DIARY,
I'M WRITING THIS HERE BCAUSE IM PRETTY SURE MOM SNEAKS IN SOMETIMES TO READ MY DIARY. DUMB MOM STUFF. MOM GIVES ME THE JUNIOR JUMBLES TO DO DURING CHURCH SO ILL SIT STILL BUT I NEVER DO THEM. SO I'M GOING TO WRITE THESE SECRETS ON THE BACKS OF THE JUNIOR JUMBLES AND THEN HIDE THEM SO SHE'LL NEVER FIND THEM!
I GOT A NEW BROTHER (SISTER???) TODAY. MOM AND DAD FOUND A HUMAN KID WHEN WE WENT WALKING IN THE WOODS AFTER CHURCH ALL ALONE! WHO LEAVES A KID IN THE WOODS ALONE?? MOM SAYS WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF IT NOW. SO HE'S GONNA BE MY BROTHER OR SISTER.
THIS IS THE FIRST HUMAN IVE EVER SEEN. I DON'T LIKE IT! WHERES THE HUMAN MOM AND DAD? THE HUMAN DOESN'T EVEN CRY EVEN THOUH SHE'S REALLY LITTLE HE JUST LOOKS AROUND LIKE A ZOMBY. ARE ALL HUMANS CREEPY?
I TOLD MOM I DIDNT WANT US TO KEEP THE HUMAN SAID WE HAD TO. SHE SAID I SHOULD TRY TO LIKE IT. BUT KNOW IF I LIKE IT BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE MEAN OR BAD IM GONG TO BE THE BEST BROTHER EVER.
~ASRIEL

KRIS!
I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE...UM...IS IT OKAY IF I TALK TO YOU?
YEAH.

I GUESS, I'M JUST...I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU AND SUSIE HAVE BEEN GONE FROM CLASS ALL WEEK.
AND IN GENERAL YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD, A-AND I...
I GUESS, I JUST...WANT TO KNOW... DO YOU...L-LIKE SUSIE?
I MEAN, I WOULD COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND IF YOU DID! JUST...AFTER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT ON MONDAY... I JUST WANT YOU TO BE HONEST! I'LL UNDERSTAND...
NO. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
THEN...WHAT IS GOING ON? BECAUSE FROM WHAT I SEE...I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY ELSE YOU AND SUSIE JUST KEEP VANISHING TOGETHER.

I PROMISE I'LL UNDERSTAND! AND I WON'T TELL ANY ADULTS, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THAT. I KNOW HOW IT IS!
SORRY. I...DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.
ARE YOU SURE? KRIS, I...DON'T WANT YOU TO GET IN TROUBLE OR ANYTHING.
I KNOW.
WELL...I WON'T PESTER YOU...IF YOU DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING. I KNOW THAT'S HARD FOR YOU.
WAIT! UMM...IF NOTHING ELSE! SINCE YOU'RE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME WITH SUSIE...

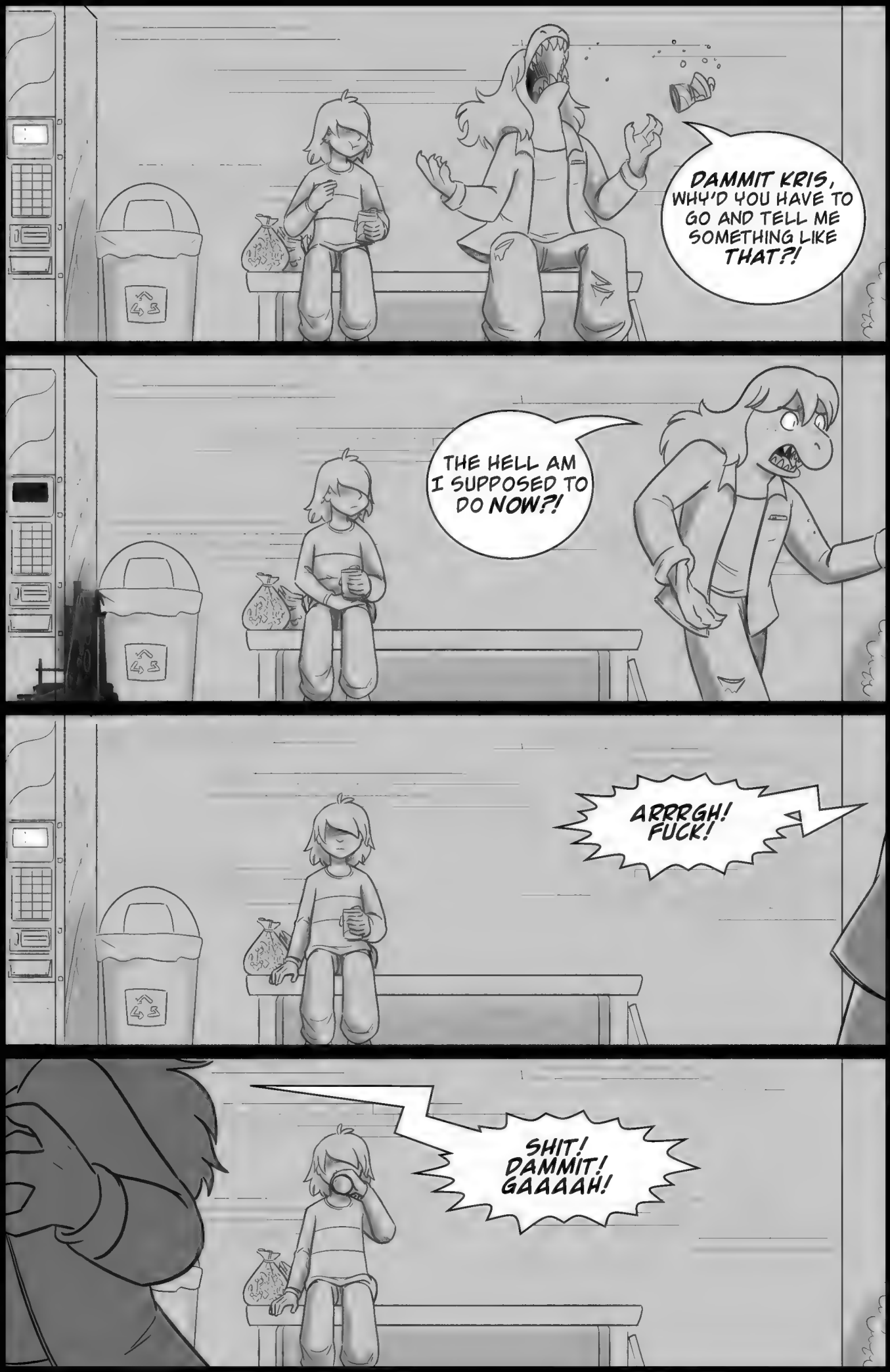
C-COULD YOU MAYBE... LET HER KNOW...THAT I'D LIKE TO SAY HI TO HER SOMETIME?
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
OH, THANK YOU, KRIS! I APPRECIATE—
. . .
UUUGH! WHAT DID DAD JUST SAY?!
I SHOULDN'T MAKE KRIS A MIDDLEMAN!
I SHOULD JUST TELL SUSIE MYSELF!

U-UM, KRIS, I—
IT'S THE DELTA WARRIORS!!
THEY ENTERED THE MYSTICAL KINGDOM THROUGH THE MAGIC PORTAL!
TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM ETERNAL DARKNESS!!!
MMMM-HMM...Y-YES SIR...TIME FOR YOU TO HEAD HOME NOW...

GEEZ KRIS, WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
SORRY. I WAS TALKING TO NOELLE.
HUH? ...OH YEAH, HER DAD'S HERE OR SOMETHING.
YOU DIDN'T LIKE...JUST ASK IF WE COULD DIG THROUGH HER HOUSE, RIGHT?
I MEAN THAT'S NOT GONNA...WORK OUT GREAT...
I DIDN'T.
OKAY, GOOD.

GLUG GLUG
YOU KNOW THAT NOELLE LIKES YOU, RIGHT?
SPFFFFKKT
IT WASN'T A JOKE.
STOP BEING AN ASSHOLE, KRIS! PEOPLE DON'T LIKE ME.
GUH... BERRY BUNDY, GRIS! DAT HURT MUH GNOSE...
POPATO

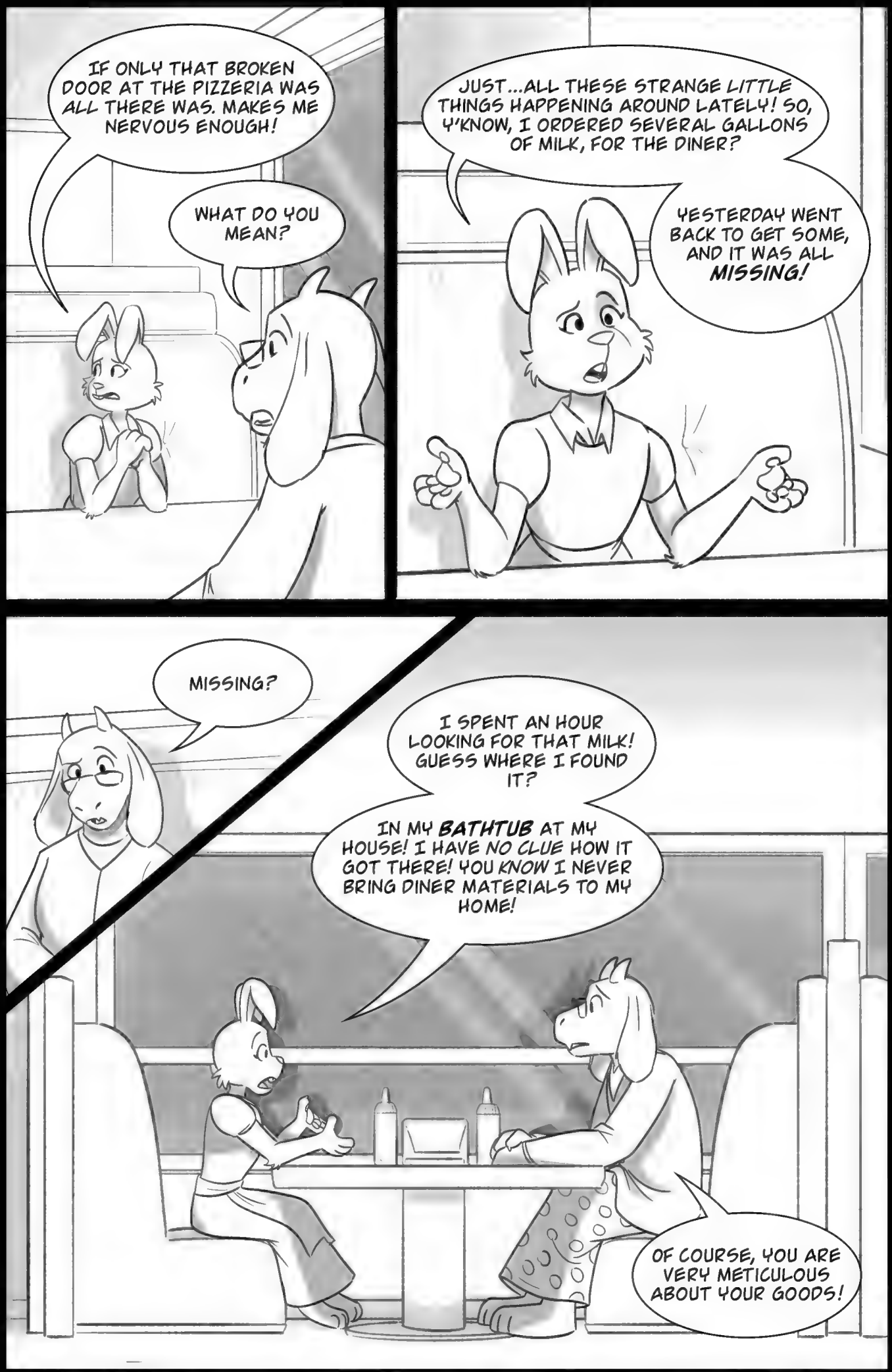
WOW. AND WITH LANCER RIGHT THERE IN YOUR FRONT POCKET.
SHUT UP, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN! PEOPLE DON'T LIKE-LIKE ME!!
I MEAN, NOELLE'S SMART AND NICE AND SMELLS GOOD AND GETS ALONG WITH EVERYONE...
AND...WHAT COULD SHE EVEN LIKE ABOUT ME?
YOU COULD TALK TO HER AND ASK. HEAR IT DIRECTLY FROM HER.


DAMMIT KRIS, WHY'D YOU HAVE TO GO AND TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?!
ARRRGH! FUCK!
SHIT! DAMMIT! GAAAAH!

TAP TAP
TAP TAP
BZZT BZZT!
MS. TORIEL? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU'VE BEEN HERE BY YOURSELF FOR OVER TWENTY MINUTES.

OH, I AM QUITE ALL RIGHT! I WAS JUST... SUPPOSED TO MEET SOMEONE HERE.
SOMEONE? OOH...DO YOU MEAN THAT NEW SKELETON FELLOW WHO MOVED INTO TOWN?
THAT IS RIGHT.
OH DEAR, HE DIDN'T STAND YOU UP, DID HE?
I WAS AFRAID SO, BUT I JUST RECEIVED A TEXT FROM HIM... APPARENTLY SOME EMERGENCY CAME UP REGARDING HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.
HE WANTS TO KNOW IF WE CAN RESCHEDULE TO SUNDAY NIGHT.
HMMM...
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S FINE TO TRY AGAIN, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.
OH...I AM NOT SURE ***WHAT*** I WANT RIGHT NOW! PERHAPS JUST A NICE EVENING TO GET MY MIND OFF OF THINGS...

IT'S BEEN SUCH A STRANGE WEEK... SETS MY NERVES RIGHT ON EDGE, I TELL YOU!
YES, I HEARD ABOUT THE VANDALISM AT THE PIZZERIA THIS MORNING! DID OFFICER UNDYNE EVER FIND OUT WHO DID IT?
NO, THAT'S THE WEIRD THING! DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING WAS STOLEN, EITHER.
LIKE IT WAS A SPIRIT OR SOMETHIN'!
OR, PERHAPS, SOME BORED TEENS PULLING A MEAN PRANK...
NOT YOUR KRIS, THOUGH.
OF COURSE NOT!
I KNOW KRIS CAN BE... MISCHIEVOUS AT TIMES, BUT THEY KNOW BETTER THAN TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.


IF ONLY THAT BROKEN DOOR AT THE PIZZERIA WAS ALL THERE WAS. MAKES ME NERVOUS ENOUGH!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
JUST...ALL THESE STRANGE LITTLE THINGS HAPPENING AROUND LATELY! SO, Y'KNOW, I ORDERED SEVERAL GALLONS OF MILK, FOR THE DINER?
YESTERDAY WENT BACK TO GET SOME, AND IT WAS ALL MISSING!
MISSING?
I SPENT AN HOUR LOOKING FOR THAT MILK! GUESS WHERE I FOUND IT?
IN MY BATHTUB AT MY HOUSE! I HAVE NO CLUE HOW IT GOT THERE! YOU KNOW I NEVER BRING DINER MATERIALS TO MY HOME!
OF COURSE, YOU ARE VERY METICULOUS ABOUT YOUR GOODS!

SAME THING HAPPENED WITH CATTI'S FATHER! HIS BARBECUE TONGS WENT MISSING...SOMEHOW SHOWED UP IN THEIR GATOR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE!
NOW THOSE FAMILIES ARE IN A BIT OF A SQUABBLE WITH EACH OTHER!
BEEN HEARING THE PATRONS TALK...ALL SORTS OF WEIRD THINGS HAPPENIN' AROUND TOWN!
STUFF GOING MISSING OR BEING MOVED; LIGHTS NOT WORKIN'.
PEOPLE FEELIN' LIKE THEY'RE BEING WATCHED.
AND THAT'S NOT EVEN THE WORST OF IT...
WHAT IS THE WORST?
WELL, YOU KNOW OFFICER BLOOK'S COUSIN? THE ONE THAT'S A BIT OF A SHUT-IN?
HE'S MISSING.
WHAT?

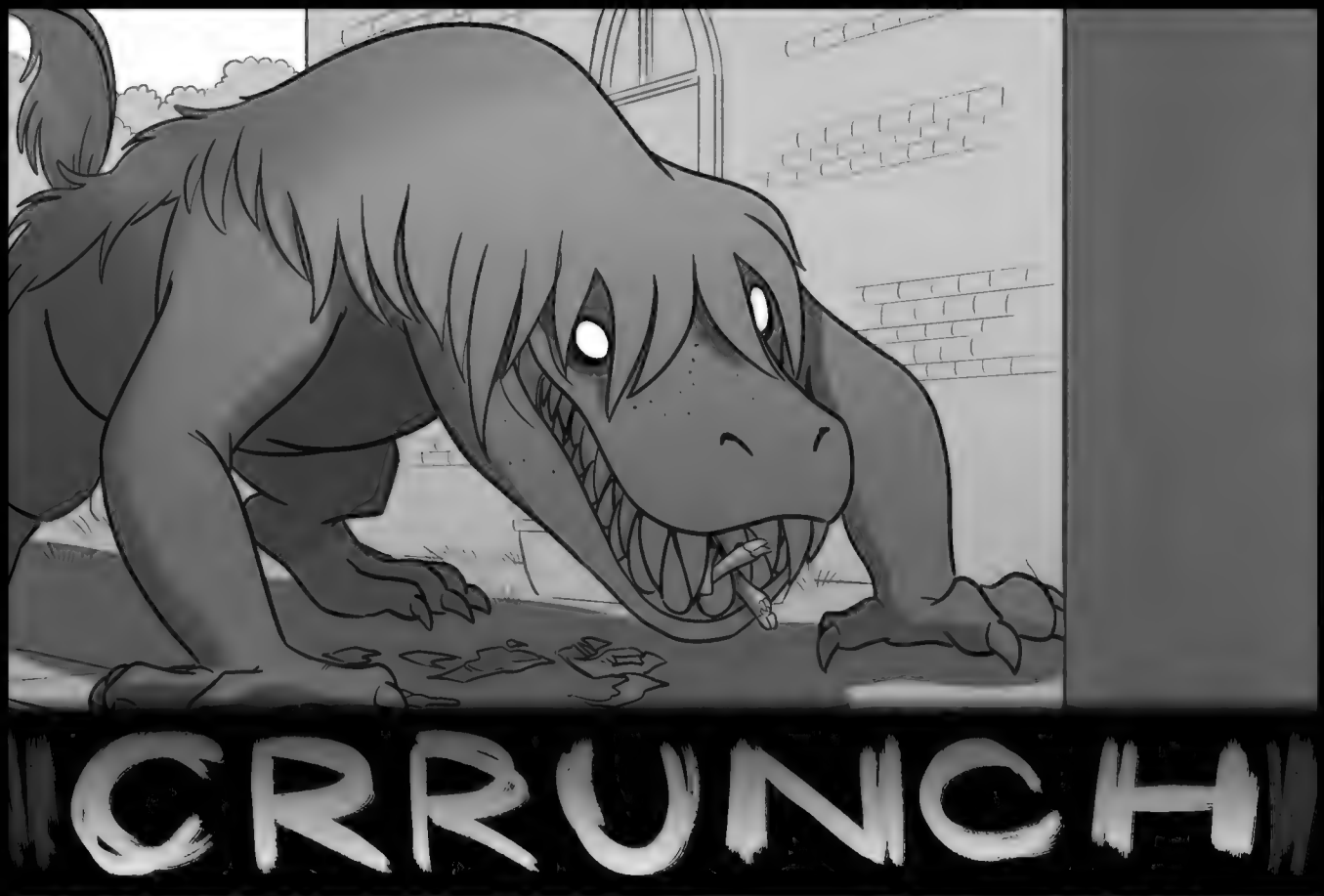
YEAH, HE JUST UP AND VANISHED!
THAT'S WHY UNDYNE HASN'T BEEN FOCUSING MUCH ON THE PIZZERIA...BUSY HELPING OFFICER BLOOK LOOK INTO THIS.
WELL...I RECALL OFFICER BLOOK SAYING THEIR COUSIN ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT RUNNING AWAY TO THE CITY.
MAYBE COMPLETELY CHANGING HIS LOOK, AND GETTING INTO ENTERTAINMENT. PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED?
WELL BLOOK MIGHT'VE THOUGHT THAT, BUT THEIR COUSIN DIDN'T LEAVE A NOTE OR ANYTHING. DIDN'T TAKE SO MUCH AS A SUITCASE WITH HIM.
THAT...DOES NOT SEEM RIGHT AT ALL...

OH MY GOODNESS MS. TORIEL, I AM SO SORRY TO UNLOAD ALL THAT ON YOU, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU GOT STOOD UP! I GUESS IT'S JUST BEEN WEIGHING ON MY MIND ALL WEEK!
THANK YOU FOR BEING SO UNDERSTANDING!
OH, DO NOT WORRY! IT IS ALL RIGHT—
NO, I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU! I'LL GET YOU SOME STRAWBERRY FLAPJACKS AND A HOT CHOCOLATE, ON THE HOUSE!
NO SENSE ENDING TONIGHT ON A BAD NOTE!
WELL, THANK YOU! THAT IS SO KIND OF YOU!

I HEARD... THAT YOU WANTED TO SEE ME.
OH! YES!
I JUST...YOU KNOW, PEOPLE AT SCHOOL SEEM TO THINK YOU'RE SCARY, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT.
NAH...I'M NOT SCARY...

I'M HUNGRY...
YOU'RE HUNGRY?
I'M STARVING...
RRRP
RRRP
RRSSSS
RP
OH, DEAR! IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO TO HELP?
AND YOU LOOK DELICIOUS...
RRRRP
OH THANK YOU, SUSIE! THAT'S SO NICE OF YOU TO SAY!

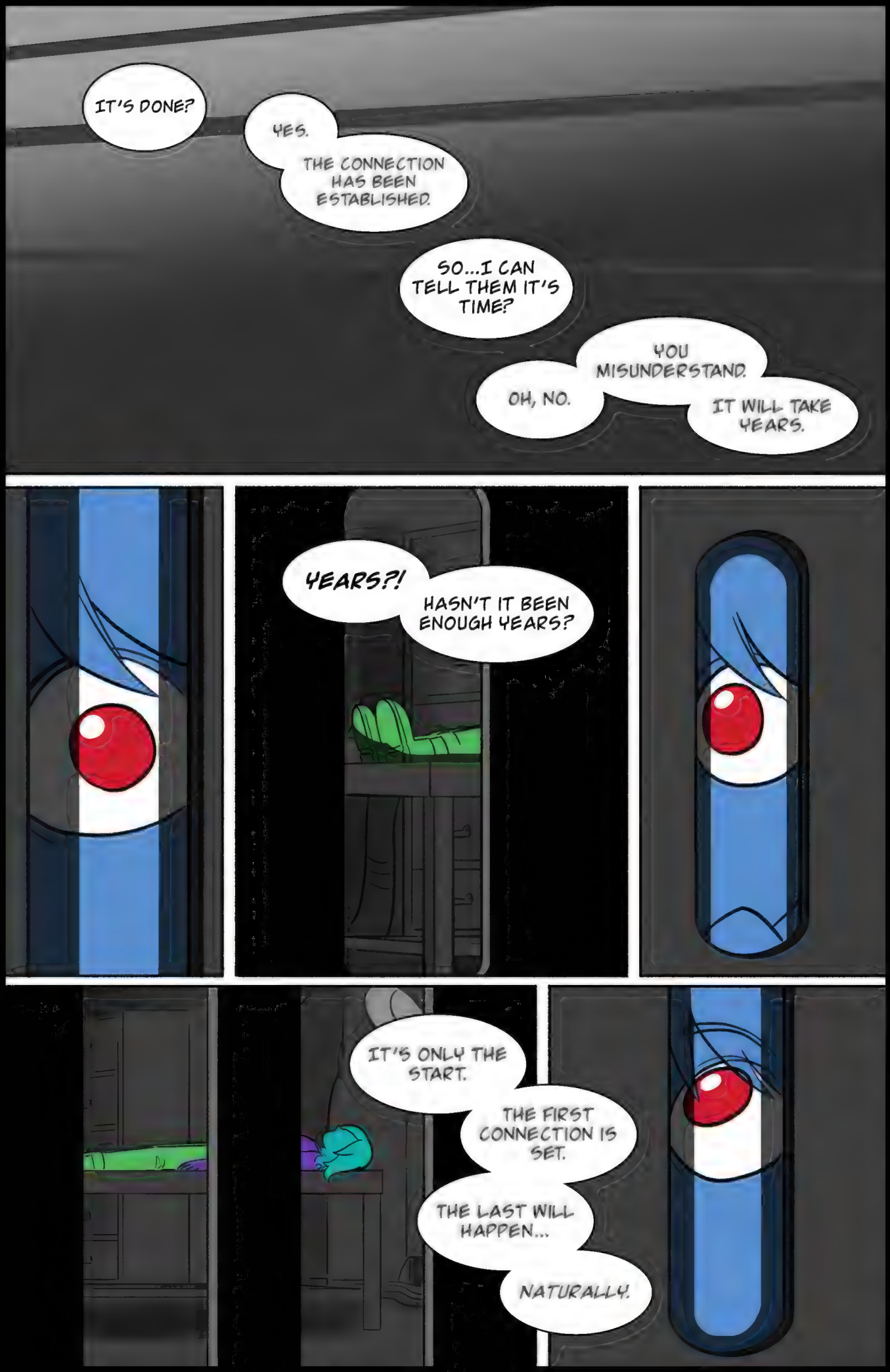
I JUST WANNA EAT YOU UP...
HRRF
HRRGF
GOSH, YOU'RE SO FLATTERING, SUSIE!
DID YOU NOT HEAR ME?..
HRRF
HRRF
OH NO, I THINK I UNDERSTAND...
YOU SHOULDN'T BE AROUND ME.
CAN'T YOU TELL?
I'M A BAD PERSON.
I DON'T HAVE ANY SELF CONTROL!
IT'S OKAY! I TRUST YOU!


CRRUNCH

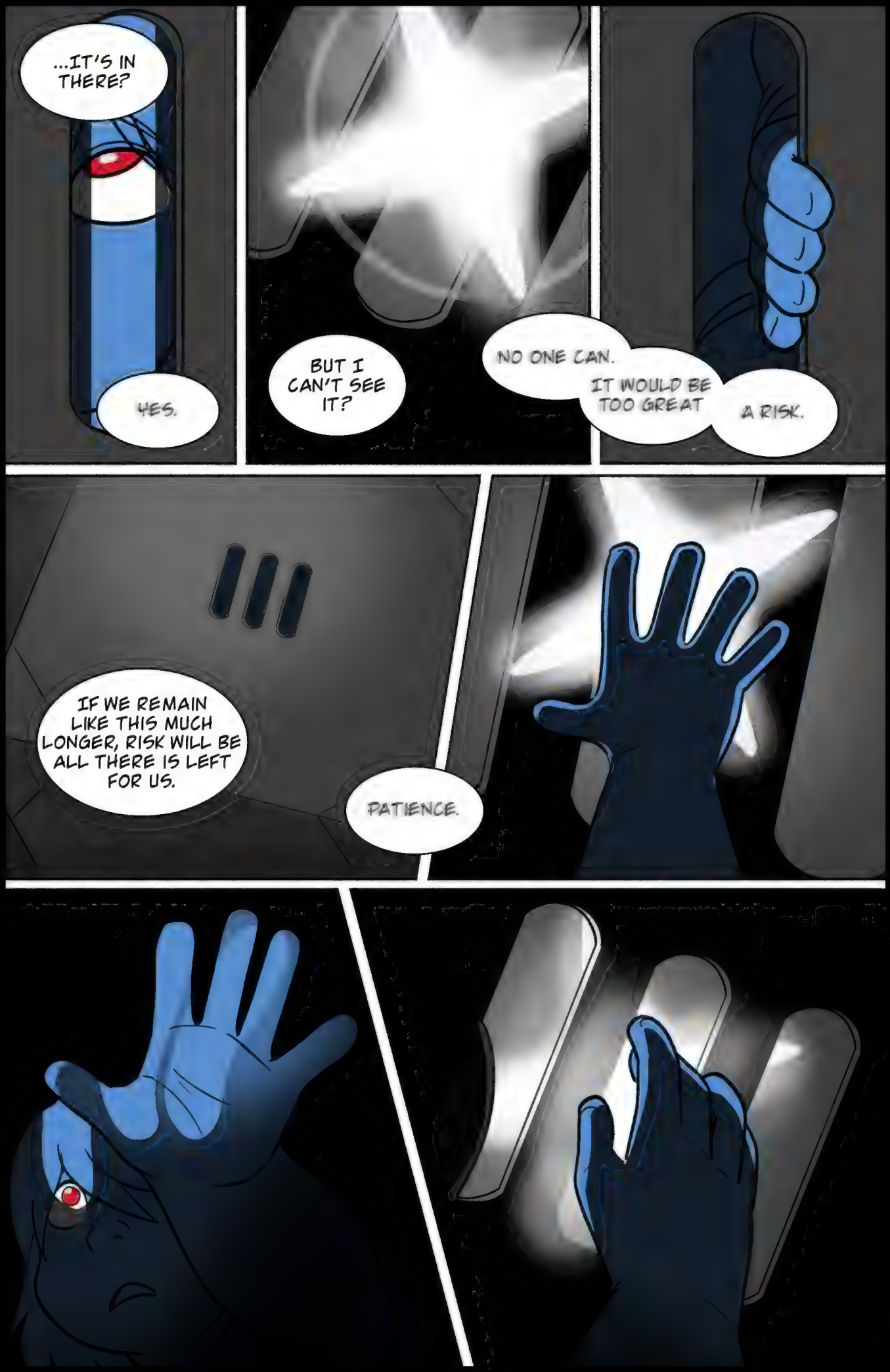
GHH
HHH!

HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF

NNGGH


IT'S DONE?
YES.
THE CONNECTION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.
SO...I CAN TELL THEM IT'S TIME?
OH, NO.
YOU MISUNDERSTAND.
IT WILL TAKE YEARS.
YEARS?!
HASN'T IT BEEN ENOUGH YEARS?
IT'S ONLY THE START.
THE FIRST CONNECTION IS SET.
THE LAST WILL HAPPEN...
NATURALLY.

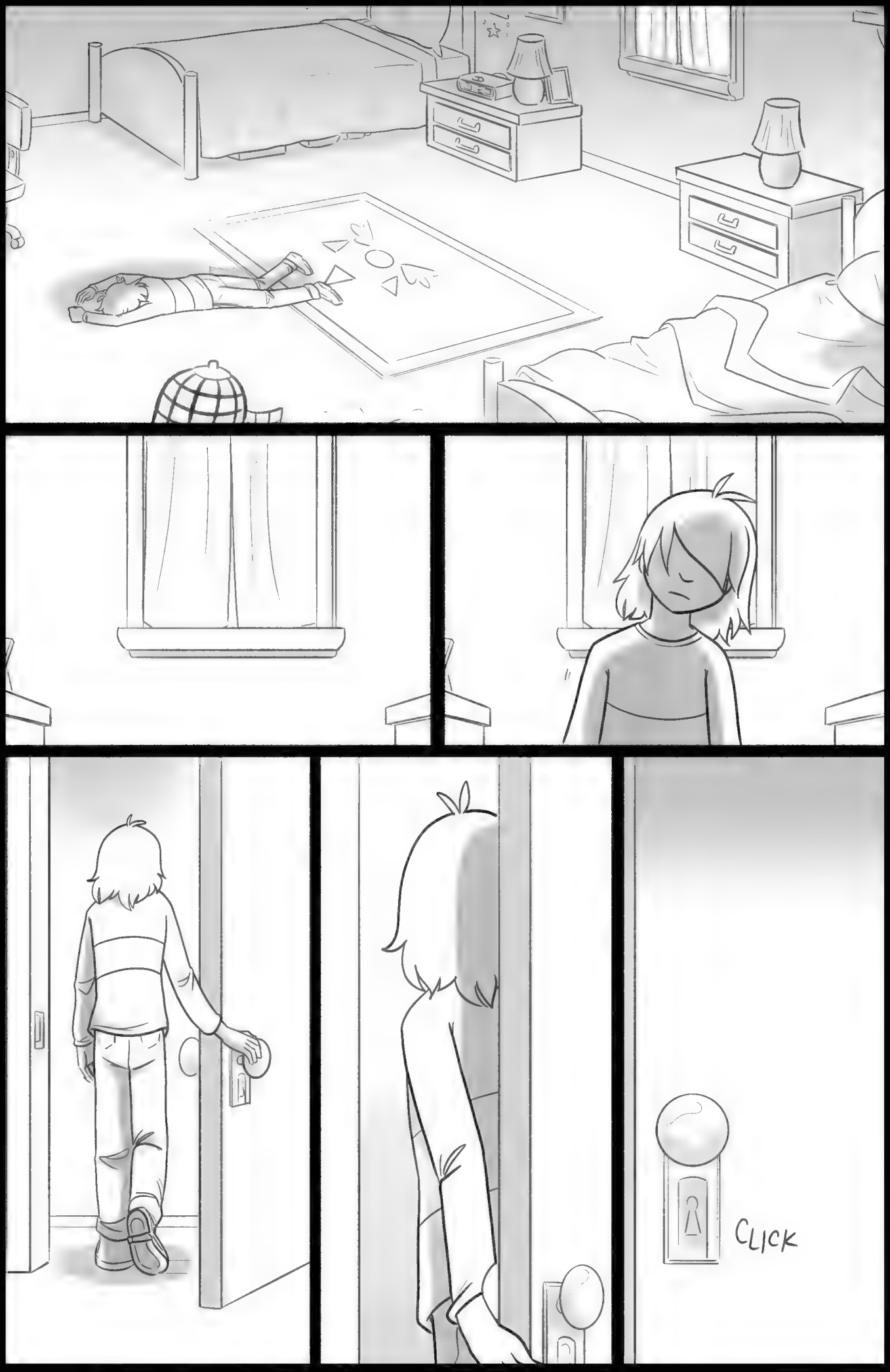
THEY WON'T ACCEPT THIS!
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THEY DON'T BELIEVE ME, ANYWAY.
EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
THEN WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL THEM?
PATIENCE.
THE OUTCOME WE DESIRE
IS INEVITABLE.
I'VE FORGED THE KEY.
NOW IT JUST NEEDS
TO BUILD THE DOOR.


...IT'S IN THERE?
YES.
BUT I CAN'T SEE IT?
NO ONE CAN.
IT WOULD BE TOO GREAT A RISK.
IF WE REMAIN LIKE THIS MUCH LONGER, RISK WILL BE ALL THERE IS LEFT FOR US.
PATIENCE.

OH? MOVING ALREADY?
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING.
TIKAKIKAAITIKTIKA
TAKAKITTIKATITITK
TAKAKKITIKATAKA

TIKATIKKATAKAKTA
HEH...
EHHHEEHEE...
HEEHEE... ACTUALLY STAYED THERE...THE WHOLE NIGHT!...
TKIKATAK
TAKATIKTKTAKAK
TAKT
HEEHEEHEH ...I'M...
TIKAT TIKATIKK
THIS TIME...
I'M GETTING AWAY...
...FROM YOU!...

THIS...TIME!...
TIKATAKKATATTOK
KALAN-KLANG
NO—
UUUGH!
AAAAGGH!

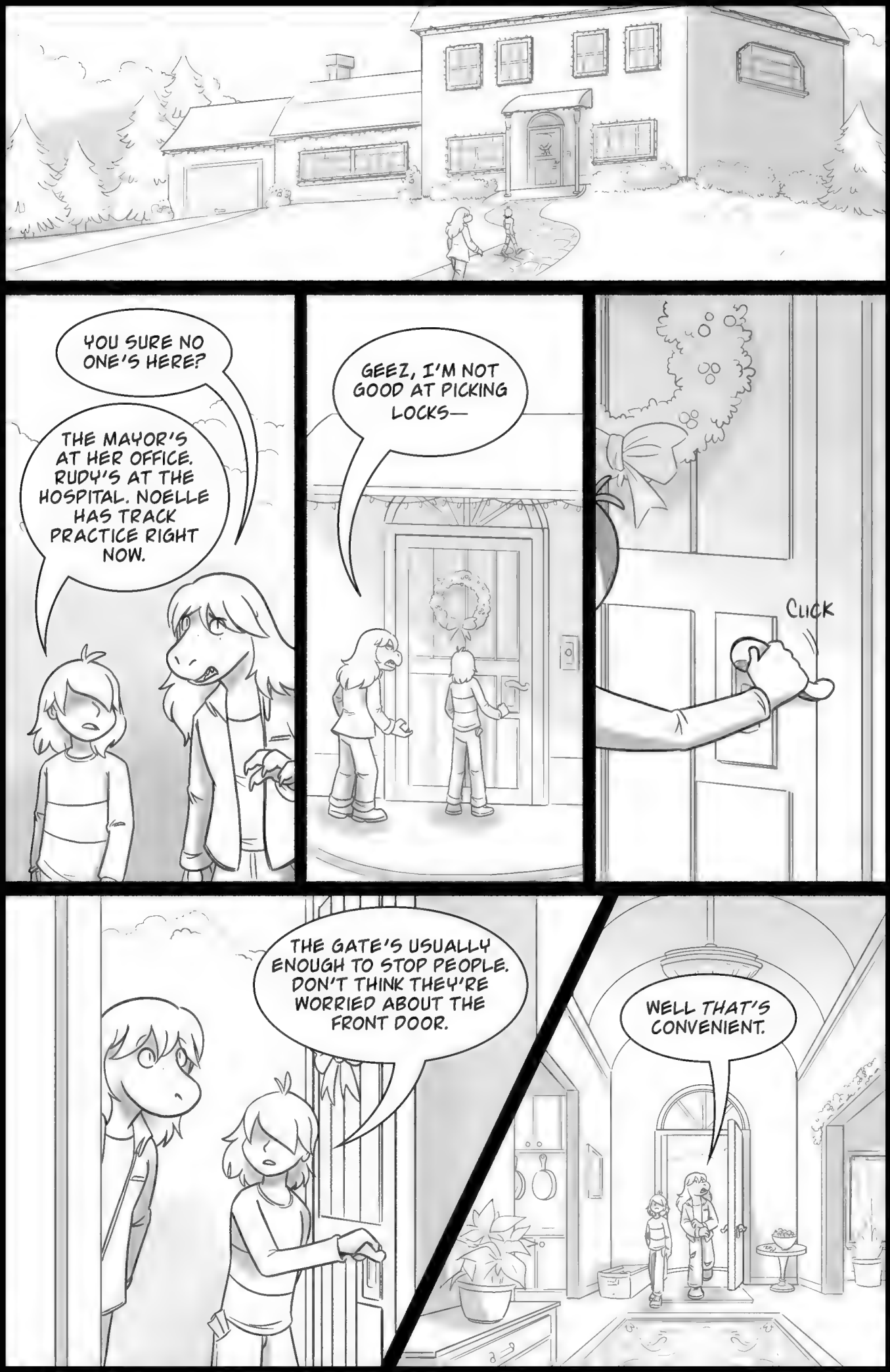

CLICK

Chapter Five

Sareli

WOW. YOU LOOK LIKE CRAP.
THANKS...? SO DO YOU.
YEAH.
DO YOU...WANNA TALK ABOUT IT?...
NO.
DO YOU?
NOPE.
GOOD.
GOOD.
...HO BOY.
DO YOU THINK, MAYBE...WE SHOULD...STOP?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? NOT FINISH FINDING EVERYONE?! NO, WE PROMISED RALSEI AND LANCER!
OOF
UURG
YOU'RE—OOF—SUPPOSED TO BE THE HERO ONE AROUND HERE!

AGHH—SINCE WHEN DID WE—
OORF—SWITCH PLACES?
OOF
SKID
SKID
SKID
FWUMP
COME ON! IF I CAN GET OVER THAT, THEN YOU—
...OH.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO.


YOU SURE NO ONE'S HERE?
THE MAYOR'S AT HER OFFICE. RUDY'S AT THE HOSPITAL. NOELLE HAS TRACK PRACTICE RIGHT NOW.
GEEZ, I'M NOT GOOD AT PICKING LOCKS—
CLICK
THE GATE'S USUALLY ENOUGH TO STOP PEOPLE. DON'T THINK THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT THE FRONT DOOR.
WELL THAT'S CONVENIENT.

LET'S BE CAREFUL NOT TO MOVE ANYTHING.
DAMN, WHERE SHOULD WE EVEN START LOOKING FOR THE DARK WORLD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?!
I HAVE AN IDEA.
TMP
TMP
TMP
CLICK!

SEEMS LIKE THEY'D PUT THE CARDS HERE.
HOW'D YOU EVEN KNOW THIS WAS HERE?
OUR PARENTS WERE FRIENDS.
I WAS OVER HERE... WITH ASRIEL, A FEW TIMES WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.
WE COULD JUST STUMBLE ACROSS IT EASIER IF WE MADE IT DARKER.

OUCH!
AAGH OUCH!
OOF!
GAHH DAMMM
...

HEY, YOU FIND IT YET?
SHHH. I CAN HEAR SOMETHING...
WHAT?
KRIS, WE'RE IN A BASEMENT. WHAT COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE UNDER A BASEMENT?!
SHHH!
THERE'S SOMETHING... UNDER THE FLOOR...

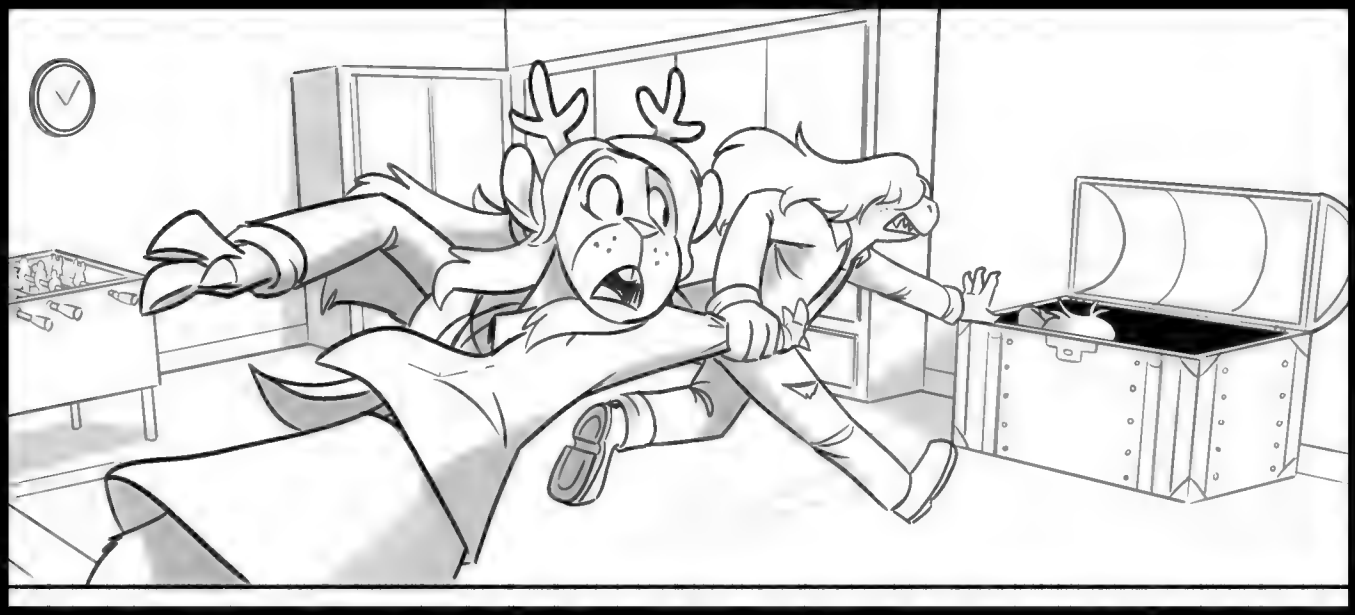
I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.
BECAUSE YOU KEEP TALKING. SHHH!
DON'T YOU SHHH ME, IT'S—
CLICK!

WH...AT. ARE YOU TWO DOING...IN MY HOUSE? WITH ALL THE LIGHTS OFF??
N-NOTHING!! NOTHING ILLEGAL!
DOOR WAS UNLOCKED, SO UMM... UHHH...
THE GATE WAS LOCKED! HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
YEAH! GREAT QUESTION!
WHICH...KRIS... WILL HELP ME EXPLAIN!
YOU GOT THIS, SUSIE.

I-I MEAN...I'M N-NOT UNHAPPY TO SEE YOU!
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL ABOUT YOU, UH...BREAKING INTO MY HOUSE!
DON'T THINK WE BROKE ANYTHING IN HERE!
I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN??
CLICK!
TAK TAK TAK
...HELLO?...
OH NO, OHMIGOSH...MY MOM'S HOME?!
WHAT?

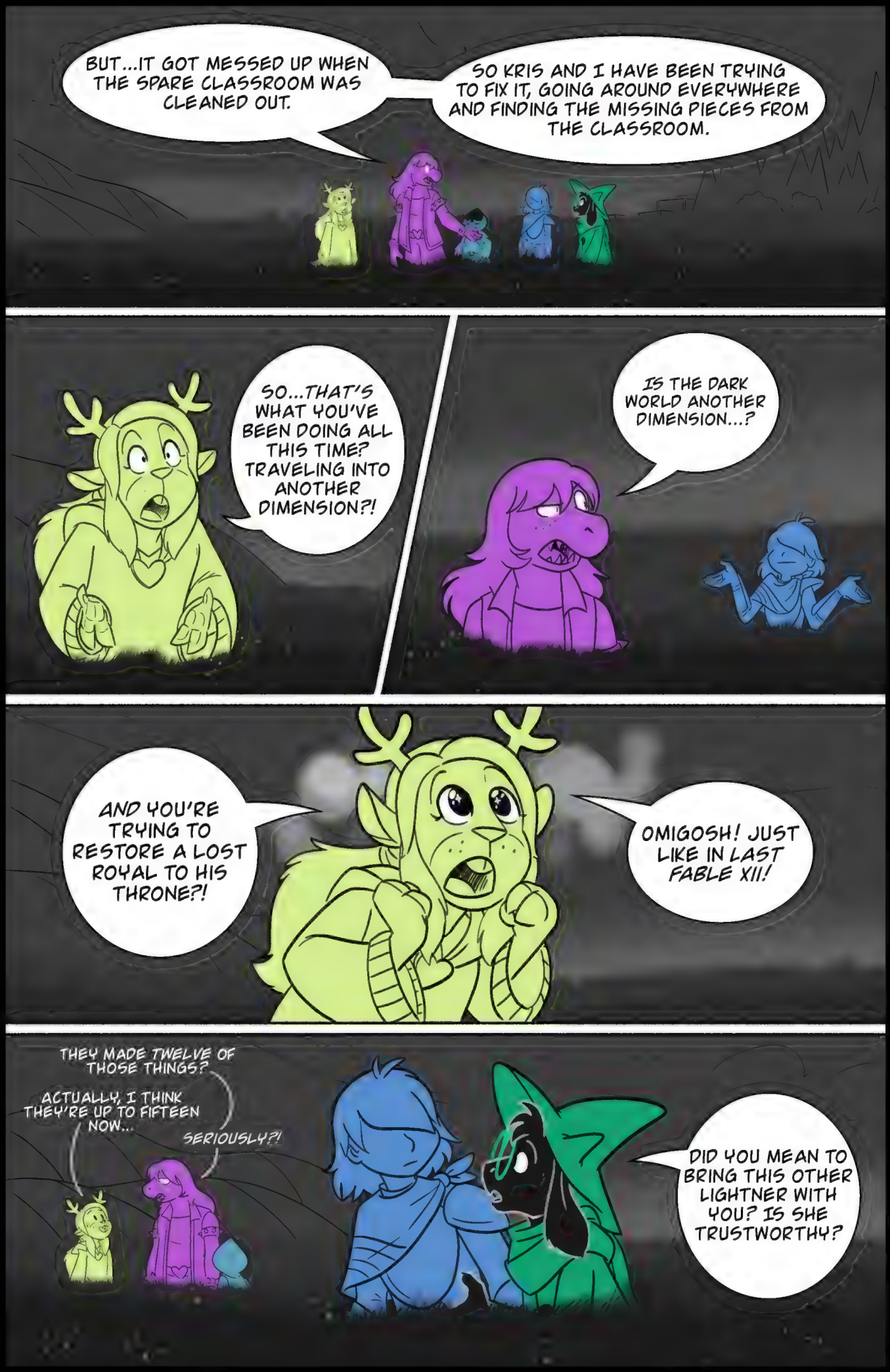
SUSIE! IT'S HERE!
NOELLE?... ARE YOU HERE?...
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE AT TRACK PRACTICE! I SKIPPED 'CAUSE I GOT A WEIRD FEELING, AND...
OHMIGOSH, I'VE NEVER PLAYED HOOKY BEFORE! I'M GONNA BE GROUNDED FOR LIFE!
HELLO? ANSWER ME!

OH NO...OH NO... OH NO...
NOELLE?
HEY! SNAP OUT OF IT!
HURRY UP!
GHHHH...
WHHH—!
UUUUGH, COME ON!



HOT CHEESE, I'M READY FOR A NEW PLACE!
POP!
POP!
WH...WHAT HAPPENED?...
OH MY GOODNESS! YOU BROUGHT ANOTHER LIGHTNER HERE?!

A NEW PERSON?! YOU LOOK LIKE THE SWEETEST LITTLE SPONGE CAKE!
OMIGOSH.
...LOOK, I HAD TO BRING HER WITH US! IT WAS GONNA BE BAD IF WE LEFT HER WITH HER MOM!
WHERE...ARE WE?
WHY ARE MY CLOTHES DIFFERENT?
WE'RE, UHH...SO THIS IS THE DARK WORLD!
KRIS AND I FIRST FOUND IT ON MONDAY, AT SCHOOL.
WITH CARD CASTLE, WHERE I LIVE! AND ALSO RULE!


BUT...IT GOT MESSED UP WHEN THE SPARE CLASSROOM WAS CLEANED OUT.
SO KRIS AND I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIX IT, GOING AROUND EVERYWHERE AND FINDING THE MISSING PIECES FROM THE CLASSROOM.
SO...THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING ALL THIS TIME? TRAVELING INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION?!
IS THE DARK WORLD ANOTHER DIMENSION...?
AND YOU'RE TRYING TO RESTORE A LOST ROYAL TO HIS THRONE?!
OMIGOSH! JUST LIKE IN LAST FABLE XII!
THEY MADE TWELVE OF THOSE THINGS?
ACTUALLY, I THINK THEY'RE UP TO FIFTEEN NOW...
SERIOUSLY?!
DID YOU MEAN TO BRING THIS OTHER LIGHTNER WITH YOU? IS SHE TRUSTWORTHY?

I THINK SO.
IT'S MORE LIGHTNERS THAN ARE IN THE PROPHECY, BUT...SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED AND WE'VE FOUND ALL THESE EXTRA FOUNTAINS, WHO EVEN KNOWS WITH THE PROPHECY RIGHT NOW!
SHE SEEMS VERY NICE, AND WELL...THE MORE FRIENDS, THE BETTER, I SAY!
IT'S VERY NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M—
OH. MY. GOODNESS. YOU LOOK EXACTLY LIKE AZZY.
AH...UH...THIS IS AWKWARD...
I KNOW, IT'S WEIRD, RIGHT?

MY NAME'S RALSEI, ACTUALLY! I'M A PRINCE OF THE DARK.
OH! SORRY, I...IT JUST TOOK ME BY SURPRISE.
IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT! I'M GLAD TO SEE KRIS AND SUSIE WITH MORE FRIENDS.
...OH, I'M NOELLE! IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO.
NICE TO MEET YA, SNOWPOFF GIRL!
THIS IS LANCER! HE'S MY FRIEND.
S-SNOWPOFF GIRL...?
WONDERFUL! IF YOU'RE READY TO JOIN THE PARTY, WE CAN GET GOING! THIS LAND IS NEW TO ALL OF US, TOO.

ME? I CAN HELP YOU FIX THINGS?
YES.
* Noelle joined the party!
W-WHERE IS THAT MUSIC COMING FROM?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS MISSED CLASSES TO SEE PLACES LIKE THIS!
...I WISH I COULD'VE GONE WITH YOU.
I'M SURPRISED WE KEPT GETTING AWAY WITH IT. FIGURED BERDLY WOULD'VE RATTED US OUT.
I THINK HE WANTED TO... BUT...
HAS...ANYONE SEEN KRIS OR SUSIE? T-THEY'VE BEEN GONE ALL WEEK...
I-I-I'M S-STARTING TO WORRY...

NOPE.
W-WELL I'M SURE THEY'RE BOTH PERFECTLY FINE A-A-AND ARE WORKING HARD ON THEIR PROJECT!
D-DEFINITELY NOTHING I'D NEED TO DISCUSS WITH KRIS'S TERRIFYING PARENTS!!
I THINK YOU, UMM... MIGHT'VE SCARED HIM OUT OF IT A LITTLE TOO HARD.
OH...YEAH. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
WHAT'RE YOU APOLOGIZING TO ME FOR...?

WHICH WAY WE HEADING, KRIS?
THERE, TO START.
WOW, KRIS. YOU'RE THE PARTY LEADER?
YES! KRIS HAS NEVER STEERED US WRONG YET. A REAL HERO!
WOW, THAT'S...SO COOL, KRIS!
SHUFF
HEY HEY SUSIE, LOOK! I FOUND THIS BROKEN POT SOMEONE PROBABLY USED TO STASH MONEY OR SALSA IN!
POP

BET YOU'D LIKE TO EAT IT, RIGHT?
YEAH YEAH, GIMME THAT...
SKRTCH SKRTCH
THAT'S WEIRD. SUSIE NORMALLY GETS REAL EXCITED ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.
SO, HOW DID YOU AND SUSIE BECOME FRIENDS?

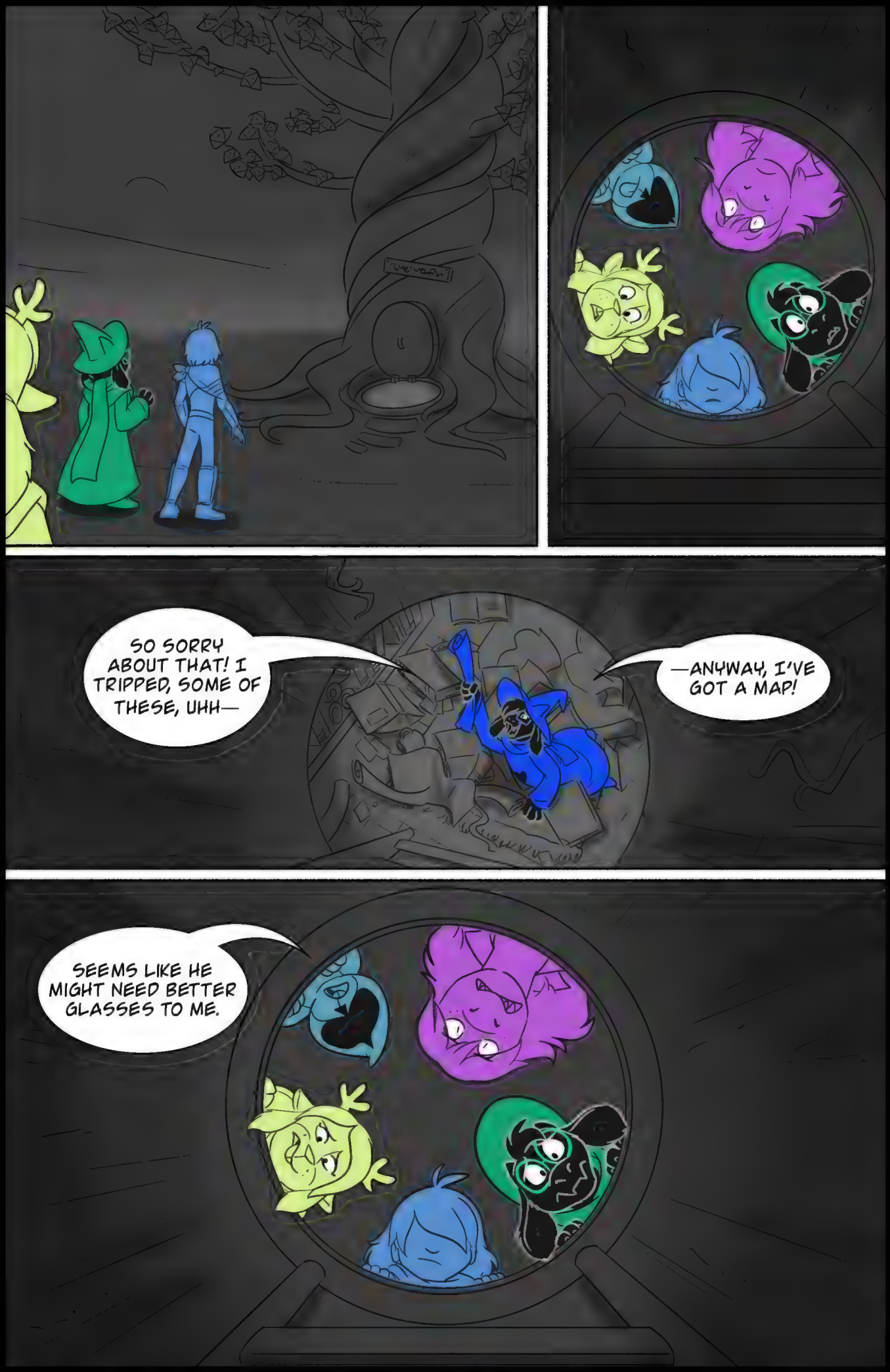
SHE WAS SHOWING ME HOW TO BE A BAD GUY! WITH AN EVIL LAUGH AND TRYING TO BITE MY FACE OFF AND EVERYTHING!
O-OH...
YEAH, SHE'S THE BEST! WE MADE A THRASH MACHINE AND BLEW IT UP, AND SHE GAVE ME DARK CANDY AND DARK PIZZA, AND WE'RE GONNA GET MATCHING JACKETS!
...SHE EVEN HELPED ME STAND UP TO MY DAD, WHEN HE WAS TRYING TO HURT EVERYONE.
I'M HAPPY SHE CAME TO THE DARK WORLD.
THAT SOUNDS REALLY COOL, ACTUALLY.

CRUNCH
CRUNCH
I THINK I SEE SOMEONE!
SHFF SHUFF
SHUFF SHUFF SHFF
OOOOOF!
OHH— GOODNESS, I'M SO SORRY! WAS TRYING TO GET—
—WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO BE A PARTY OF BRAVE WARRIORS?

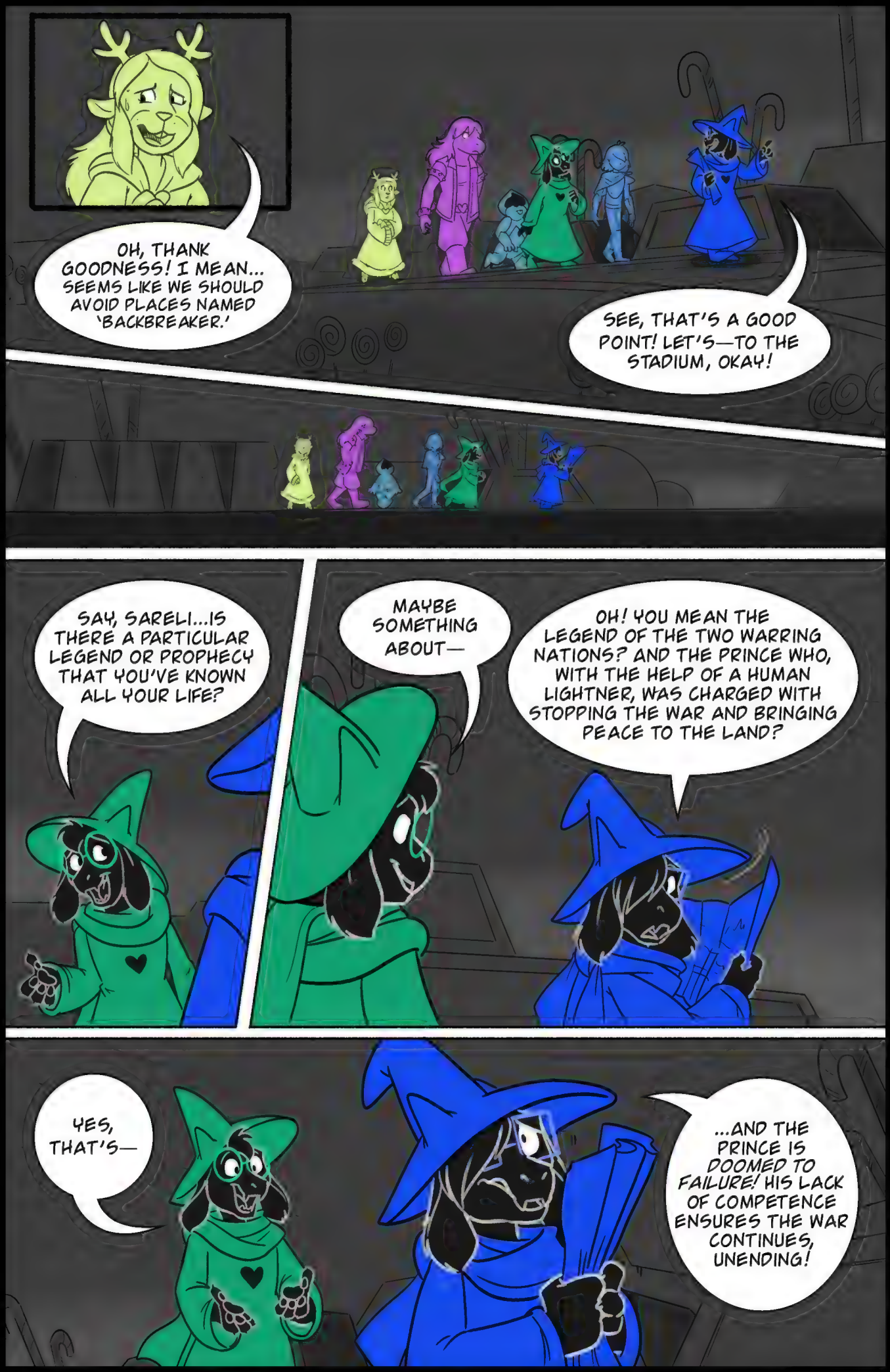
UHH...HELLO THERE! I SUPPOSE WE ARE? WE'RE CERTAINLY A PARTY OF ADVENTURERS LOOKING TO DO RIGHT!
OH, WONDERFUL, GOODNESS—JUST WHAT I NEED!
OMIGOSH...THERE'S MORE OF THEM?!
YOU HAVE NOOOO IDEA.
BLUEBERRY! THIS ONE'S BLUEBERRY FLAVOR!
"BLUEBERRY FLAVOR?" ME? WELL—IF YOU INSIST...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. WHAT'S YOUR ACTUAL NAME, FRIEND? YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'RE IN DISTRESS.
I CERTAINLY AM! WELL MY NAME'S NOT IN DISTRESS—MY NAME'S SARELI. A PRINCE, BUT WITHOUT SUBJECTS!
THAT'S MORE BOSS MOBIUS'S THING, AND—WELL, HE'S BEEN CAPTURED!

OVERTHROWN! BY A STRANGE, POWERFUL KING FROM ANOTHER LAND!
GOT A GOOD IDEA WHO THIS "KING FROM ANOTHER LAND" IS.
WHO?
...MY DAD.
...OH DEAR.
THIS LAND'S BEEN OVERRUN WITH THE NEW KING'S SUBJECTS AND HE'S FORCING ALL OF THE PEOPLE HERE UNDER HIS RULE! IT'S CHAOS!
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP, BECAUSE WELL—CERTAINLY NOT ME! I'M NO HELP IN THINGS LIKE THIS!
OH, I'M SURE THAT'S NOT TRUE! YOU CAN HELP US OUT RIGHT NOW BY LEADING US TO WHERE WE CAN FIND THIS KING!
REALLY? YOU'D—BE OKAY WITH ME GUIDING YOU?
OF COURSE!
OH! THAT'S—VERY NICE! ONLY, I'M SURE I'LL GET YOU GOOD PEOPLE LOST, SO, UH...

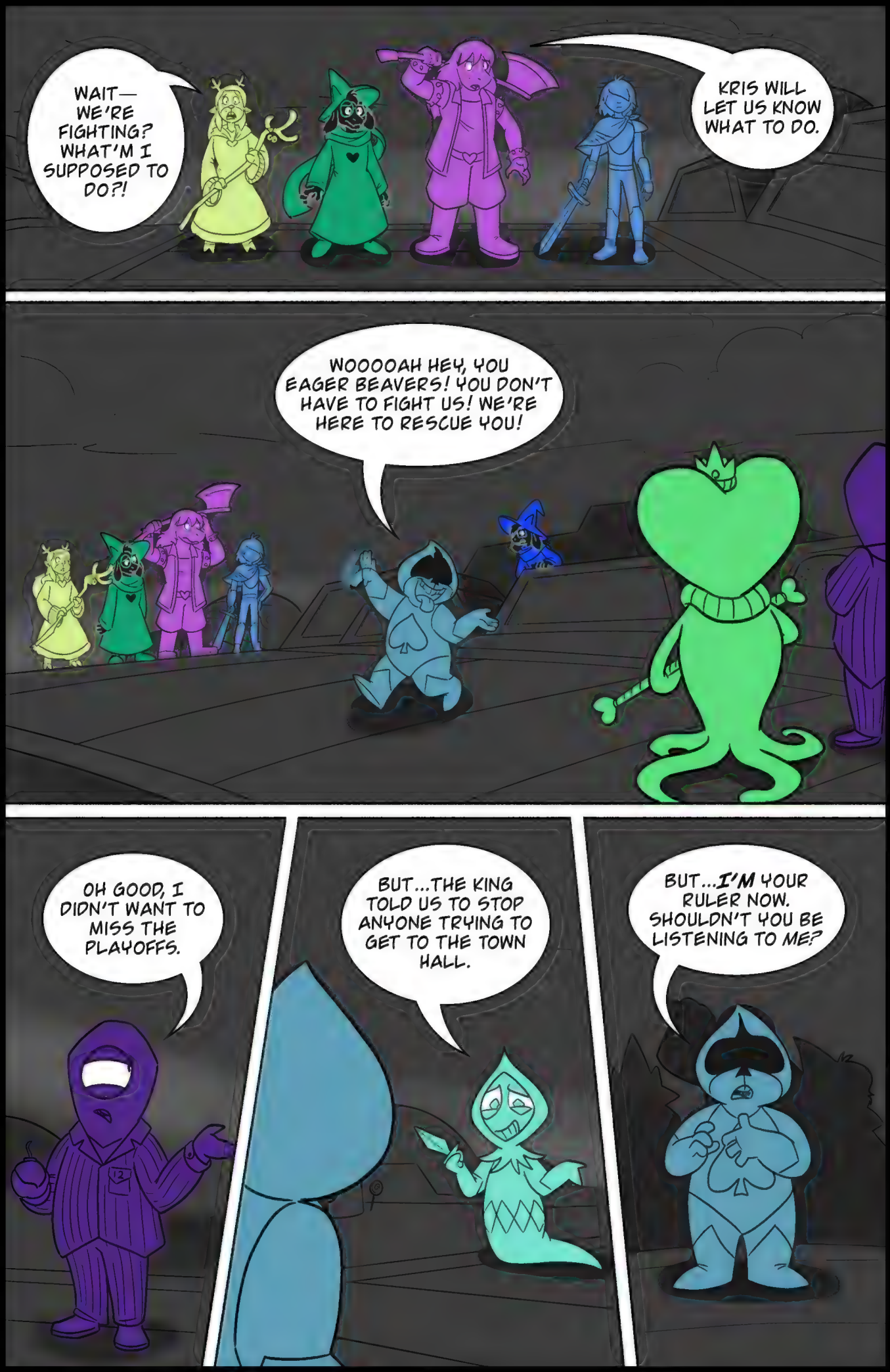
OH, I KNOW! I HAVE A MAP IN MY HOME!
I'LL JUST—I'LL JUST GO AND GET IT...
GOTTA SAY... DUNNO HOW I FEEL ABOUT BLUEBERRY.
IT SEEMS LIKE HE NEEDS A LITTLE MORE FAITH IN HIMSELF.
BETTER THAN GOOFY GRAPE, THOUGH.
HOW MANY ASRIEL WIZARDS ARE THERE...?
CRASH!!


SO SORRY ABOUT THAT! I TRIPPED, SOME OF THESE, UHH—
—ANYWAY, I'VE GOT A MAP!
SEEMS LIKE HE MIGHT NEED BETTER GLASSES TO ME.

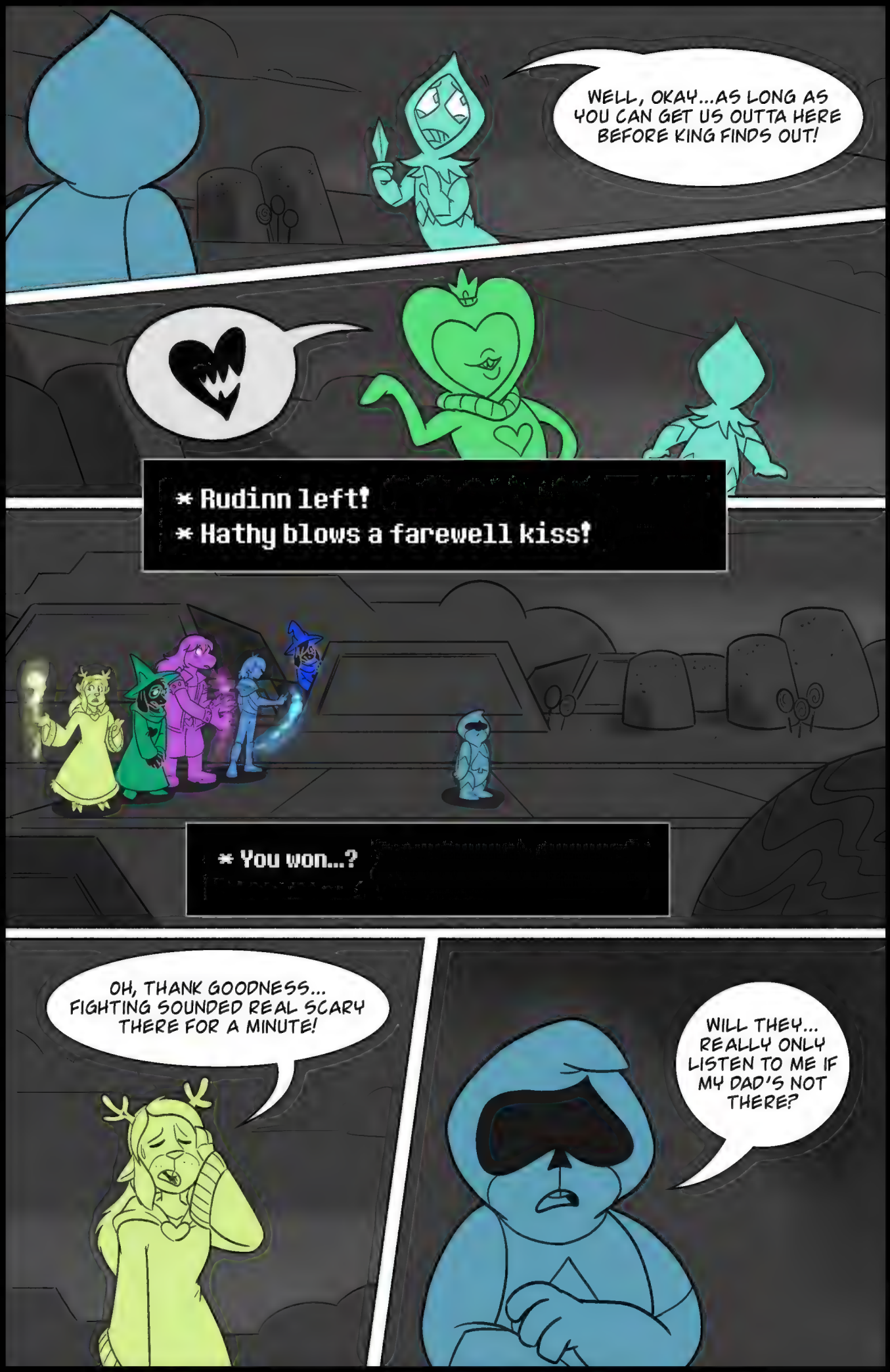
SO, WELL—IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, THERE'S UH...TWO PATHS TO GET TO TOWN HALL.
WE CAN GO THROUGH THE COLLEGE SPORTS STADIUM, OR BACKBREAKER PEAKS.
SO...YOU KNOW THIS LAND BETTER THAN ANY OF US! WHICH WAY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?
OH NO, YOU DON'T WANT MY—I-I DON'T THINK MY RECOMMENDATION'S WORTH MUCH!
AND YOU—THERE'S ALREADY A PARTY LEADER...
THE SPORTS STADIUM, THEN.


OH, THANK GOODNESS! I MEAN... SEEMS LIKE WE SHOULD AVOID PLACES NAMED 'BACKBREAKER.'
SEE, THAT'S A GOOD POINT! LET'S—TO THE STADIUM, OKAY!
SAY, SARELI...IS THERE A PARTICULAR LEGEND OR PROPHECY THAT YOU'VE KNOWN ALL YOUR LIFE?
MAYBE SOMETHING ABOUT—
OH! YOU MEAN THE LEGEND OF THE TWO WARRING NATIONS? AND THE PRINCE WHO, WITH THE HELP OF A HUMAN LIGHTNER, WAS CHARGED WITH STOPPING THE WAR AND BRINGING PEACE TO THE LAND?
YES, THAT'S—
...AND THE PRINCE IS DOOMED TO FAILURE! HIS LACK OF COMPETENCE ENSURES THE WAR CONTINUES, UNENDING!

THAT'S, UH...NOT WHERE I EXPECTED THAT TO GO...
GEEZ, NO WONDER BLUEBERRY'S DEPRESSED.
ARE YOU SURE? THAT DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT...
HEY, HOLD IT THERE, LIGHTNERS!
* Various suits appeared!


WAIT— WE'RE FIGHTING? WHAT'M I SUPPOSED TO DO?!
KRIS WILL LET US KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WOOOOAH HEY, YOU EAGER BEAVERS! YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT US! WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU!
OH GOOD, I DIDN'T WANT TO MISS THE PLAYOFFS.
BUT...THE KING TOLD US TO STOP ANYONE TRYING TO GET TO THE TOWN HALL.
BUT...*I'M* YOUR RULER NOW. SHOULDN'T YOU BE LISTENING TO *ME*?

YEAH, NO OFFENSE, BUT KING'S FREE NOW, AND HE'S WAY BIGGER AND SCARIER THAN YOU.
I...I'M BIG AND SCARY, TOO...
OH COME ON, I KNOW YOU GUYS DON'T ACTUALLY LIKE FIGHTING!
IF YOU DECIDED TO MAKE LANCER YOUR LEADER, YOU COULD AT LEAST SHOW SOME RESPECT!
LOOK CHUMPS, I GOT CONSCRIPTED INTO THIS ANYWAY, SO I'M GONNA KNOCK OFF.
* Stripes Dozen got bored and left!


WELL, OKAY...AS LONG AS YOU CAN GET US OUTTA HERE BEFORE KING FINDS OUT!
* Rudinn left!
* Hathy blows a farewell kiss!
* You won...?
OH, THANK GOODNESS... FIGHTING SOUNDED REAL SCARY THERE FOR A MINUTE!
WILL THEY... REALLY ONLY LISTEN TO ME IF MY DAD'S NOT THERE?

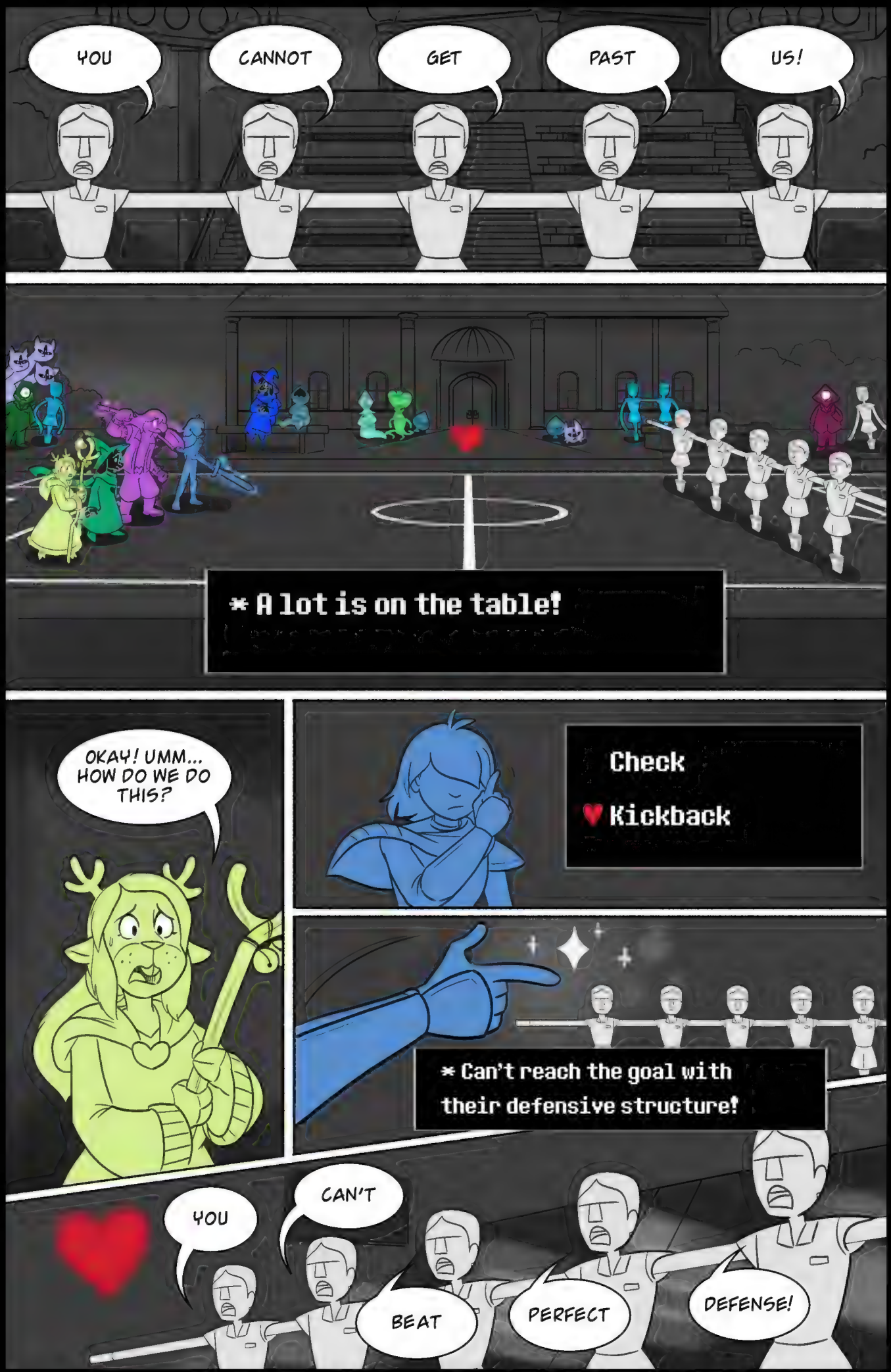
NAH, THEY'RE PROBABLY JUST TIRED AND FREAKED OUT 'CAUSE EVERYONE GOT SUDDENLY MOVED TO A NEW PLACE.
THINGS WILL BE FINE ONCE WE'VE GOT YOU ALL BACK HOME!
YEAH...YEAH, OKAY.
AH, YES, SO IT'S BEEN—THAT'S THE TAKEOVER I WAS TALKING ABOUT! BUT YOU ALL HANDLED THAT SITUATION VERY WELL!
LET'S KEEP MOVING.

WELL—HERE WE ARE! THE STADIUM IS THIS WAY.
OH, IT LOOKS NICE OVER THERE!
READY TO GO TO THE STADIUM, KRIS?
YES.
WOW...I WONDER IF AZZY'S UNIVERSITY HAS A STADIUM LIKE THIS?

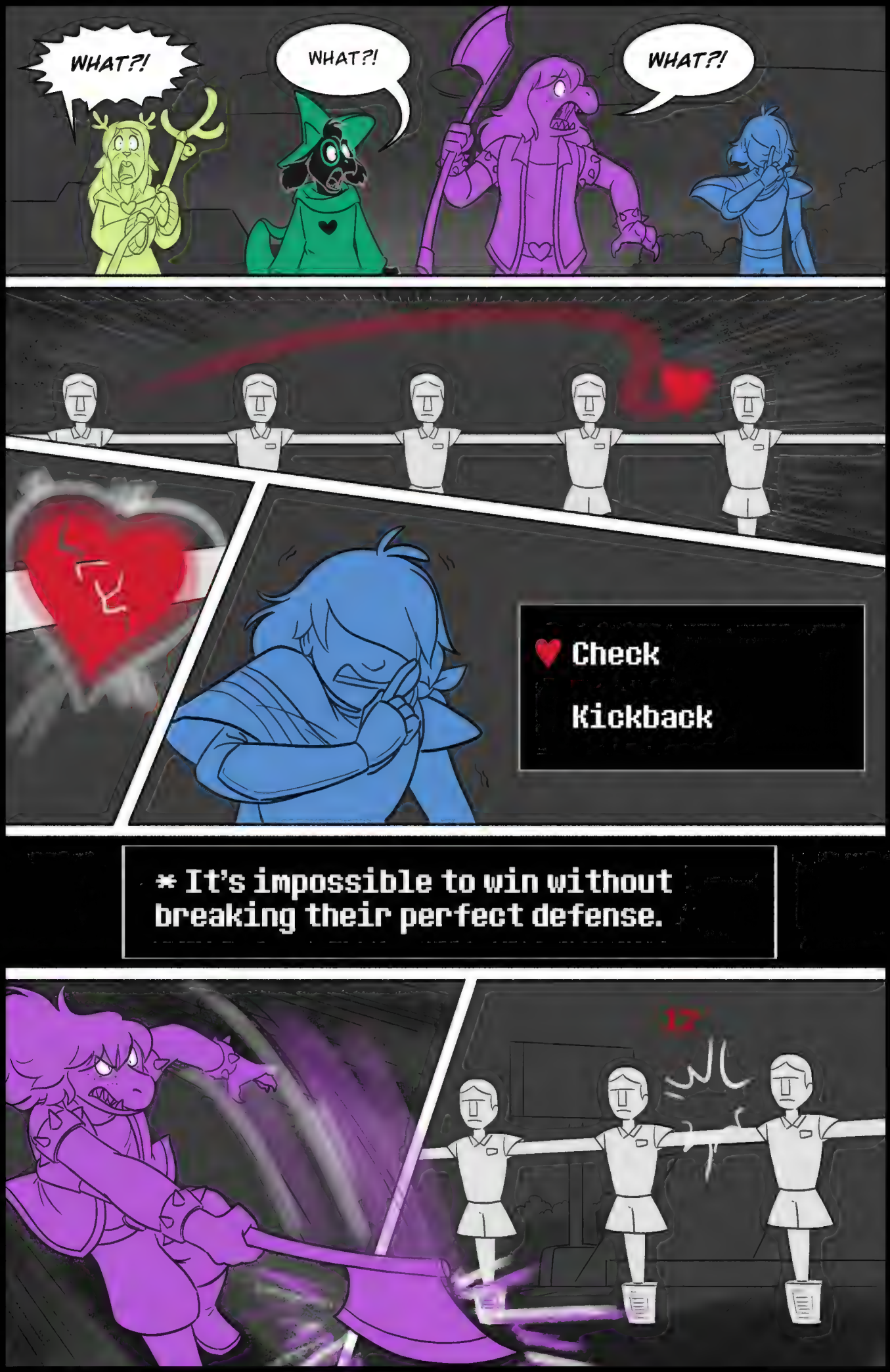
NOW YOU CARDS ARE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO SIT DOWN AND WAIT!
THIS IS ALL YOUR CHUMP KING'S FAULT, ANYWAY!
SPORTS! SPORTS! SPORTS!
YOU GUYS JUST DON'T WANT TO PLAY 'CAUSE YOU SUCK!
MAYBE WE CAN JUST COME BACK LATER...
HEY THERE! DON'T WORRY, WE'RE GONNA RESCUE YOU!
WE WANNA WATCH THE GAME!
AND KING SAYS NO GAMES UNTIL ALL YOU LIGHTNERS GET KILLED!
REALLY SORRY ABOUT THIS...
WAIT...WHAT?

THIS IS A PICKLE, A CUCUMBER, A NO-GO.
OH...EXCUSE ME? GOALIE? SEE, IF I JUST— WELL, THESE LIGHTNERS WERE GOING TO HELP FREE BOSS MOBIUS!
YOU CHUMPS GONNA GET THE BOSS BACK?
C'MON GOALIE, WE NEED T' BOSS!
WELL THE OTHER TEAM'S BEEN PAID OFF, NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT THAT, NOPE!
WHAT'S EVEN *HAPPENING?* WE JUST WANT TO GET ACROSS!
WELL, ***THOSE*** CHUMPS AIN'T GONNA LET YA.

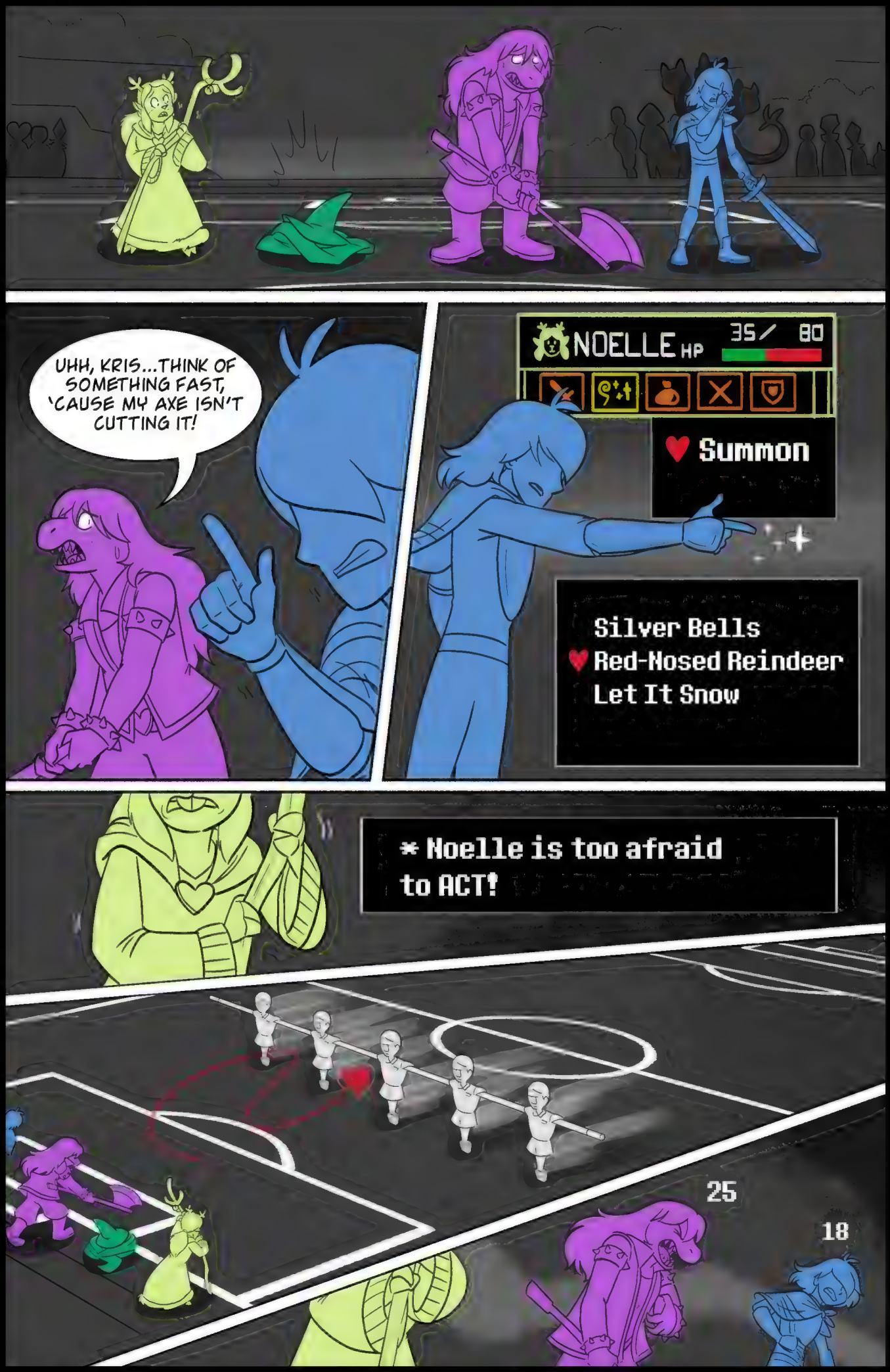
SO EITHER YOU FIND A WAY PAST THEM...OR YOU LOSE!
WELL...WE'LL GET PAST, THEN! I KNOW YOU'VE GOT THE SOLUTION, KRIS!
STOP
RIGHT
THERE
YOU
INTERLOPERS!

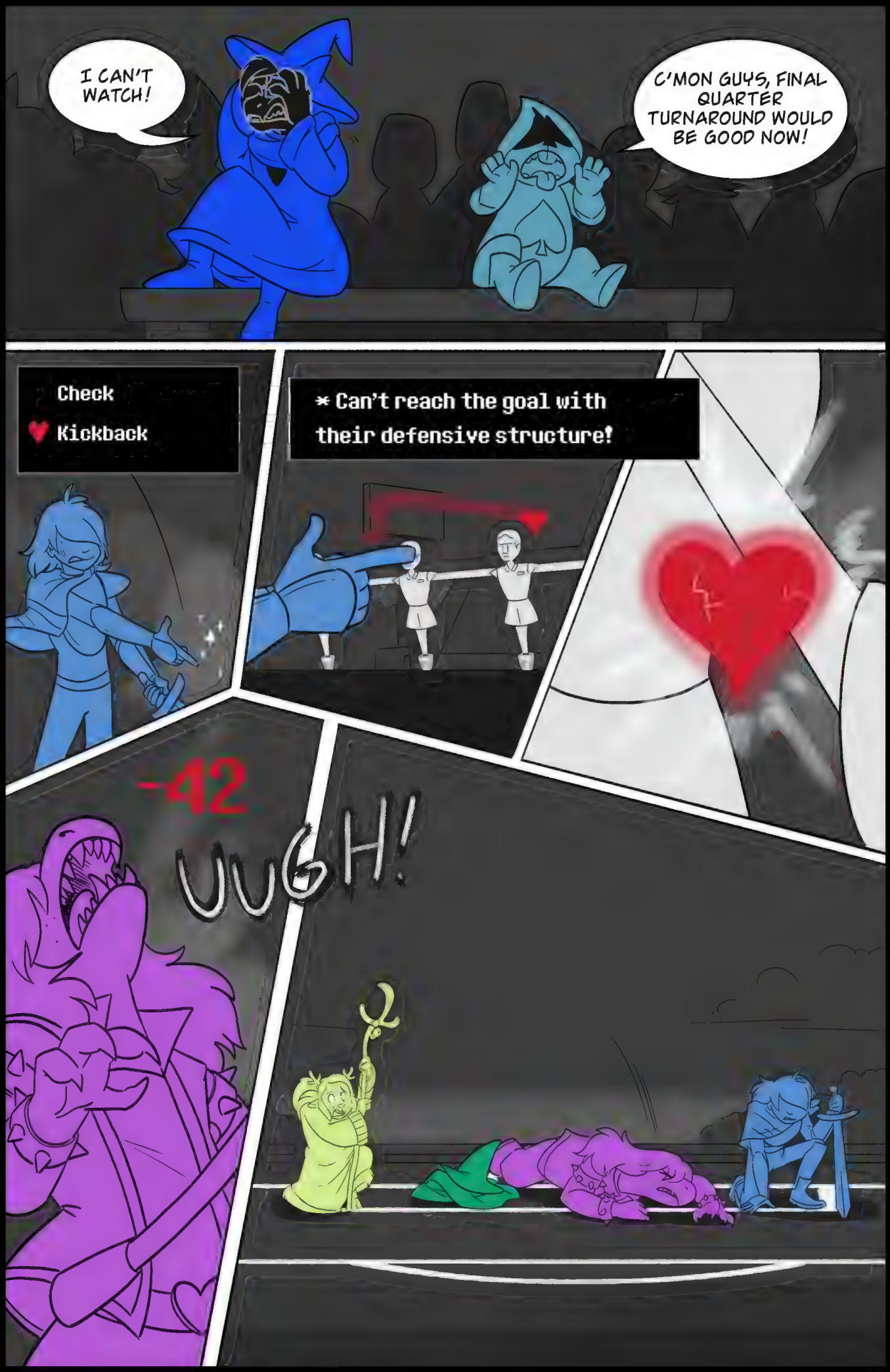

YOU
CANNOT
GET
PAST
US!
* A lot is on the table!
OKAY! UMM... HOW DO WE DO THIS?
Check
Kickback
* Can't reach the goal with their defensive structure!
YOU
CAN'T
BEAT
PERFECT
DEFENSE!

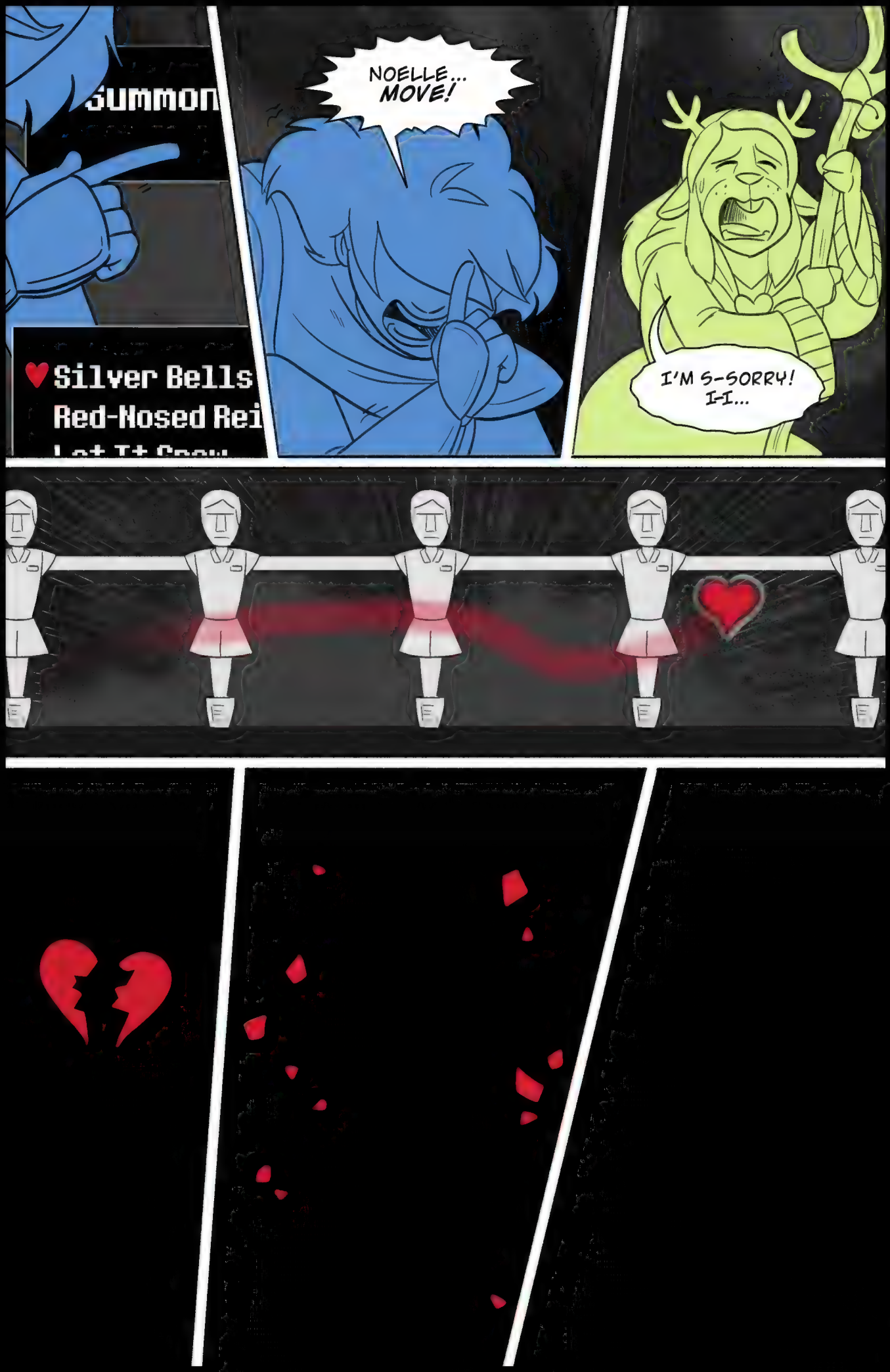
20
VUGH!
18
NNGH!
UUGH...HOW THE HELL'RE YOU SUPPOSED TO DODGE THAT?!
WAIT WAIT WAIT! WE CAN GET...FOR REAL HURT IN BATTLE?
YES, BUT DON'T WORRY, I CAN HELP WITH—
I...I THOUGHT THIS WOULD JUST BE LIKE A NUMBERS THING! WE GET ACTUALLY HURT?!
...WE CAN GET KILLED?!
IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT WE'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN THROUGH FINE, AND THE PROPHECY—
THAT'S NOT COMPLETELY TRUE.


WHAT?!
WHAT?!
WHAT?!
Check
Kickback
* It's impossible to win without breaking their perfect defense.
17

* The enemy isn't tired!
NOELLE HP 55/ 80
Summon
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Reindeer
Let It Snow
* Noelle is too afraid to ACT!
AAGH!


UHH, KRIS...THINK OF SOMETHING FAST, 'CAUSE MY AXE ISN'T CUTTING IT!
NOELLE HP 35/ 80
Summon
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Reindeer
Let It Snow
* Noelle is too afraid to ACT!
25
18

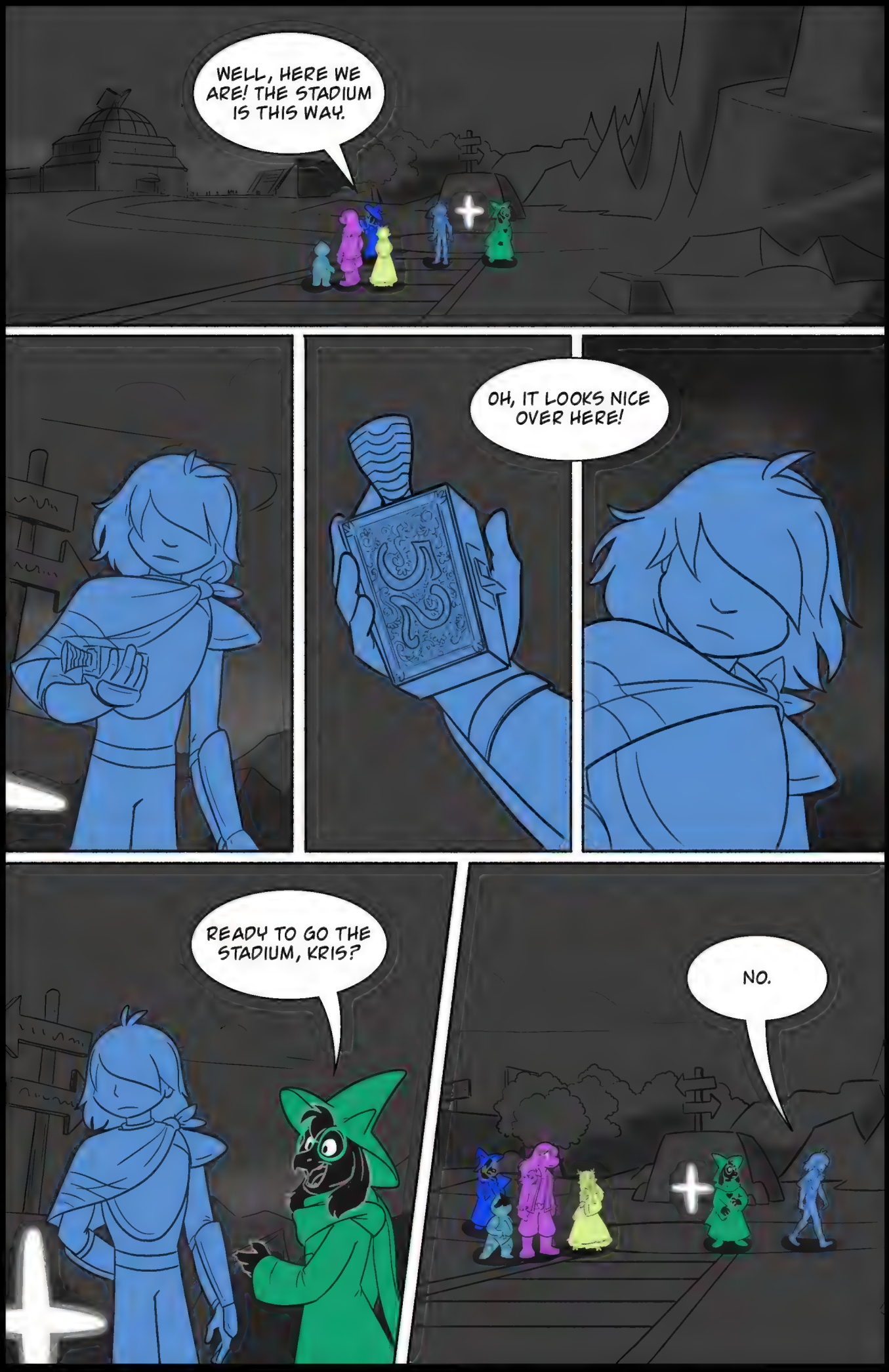

I CAN'T WATCH!
C'MON GUYS, FINAL QUARTER TURNAROUND WOULD BE GOOD NOW!
Check
Kickback
* Can't reach the goal with their defensive structure!
-42
UUGH!


Summon
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Rei
NOELLE... MOVE!
I'M S-SORRY! I-I...

WILL YOU TRY AGAIN?
YOU MUST MAKE
A DECISION.
SO MUCH DEPENDS ON YOU.
NO...

...INCENTIVE, PERHAPS?
N-NO...
A GIFT, THEN.
COMPENSATION FOR
UNFAIR DIFFICULTY.
AH, CREATION...
NO...GIFTS!
NO MORE...OF THIS...

I WASN'T
SPEAKING
TO YOU


WELL, HERE WE ARE! THE STADIUM IS THIS WAY.
OH, IT LOOKS NICE OVER HERE!
READY TO GO THE STADIUM, KRIS?
NO.

WE'RE GOING THIS WAY.
OH? WELL...IF YOU INSIST...
WAIT, KRIS! DIDN'T YOU SAY BEFORE YOU WANTED TO GO TO THE STADIUM?
CHANGED. MY. MIND.
KRIS...IS SOMETHING WRONG? YOU CAN—

NO. EVERYTHING'S LIKE IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.
RALSEI, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
THIS WAY SEEMS MORE DANGEROUS...I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I'M SORRY, IT'S MY—I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE SUGGESTED THIS ROUTE, SO...
I JUST...
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING...

NO, IT'LL BE FINE! I THINK THE BEST THING FOR US TO DO IS BE THERE FOR KRIS.
RIGHT, GUYS?
Y-YES.
SURE.
OF COURSE.

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO GO, KRIS?

POOF
YIKES!!
I DON'T WANT TO SUGGEST—I MEAN, I'M SURE YOU'VE GOT GOOD JUDGMENT, BUT...
I-I CAN DO IT!...
WAIT—!!

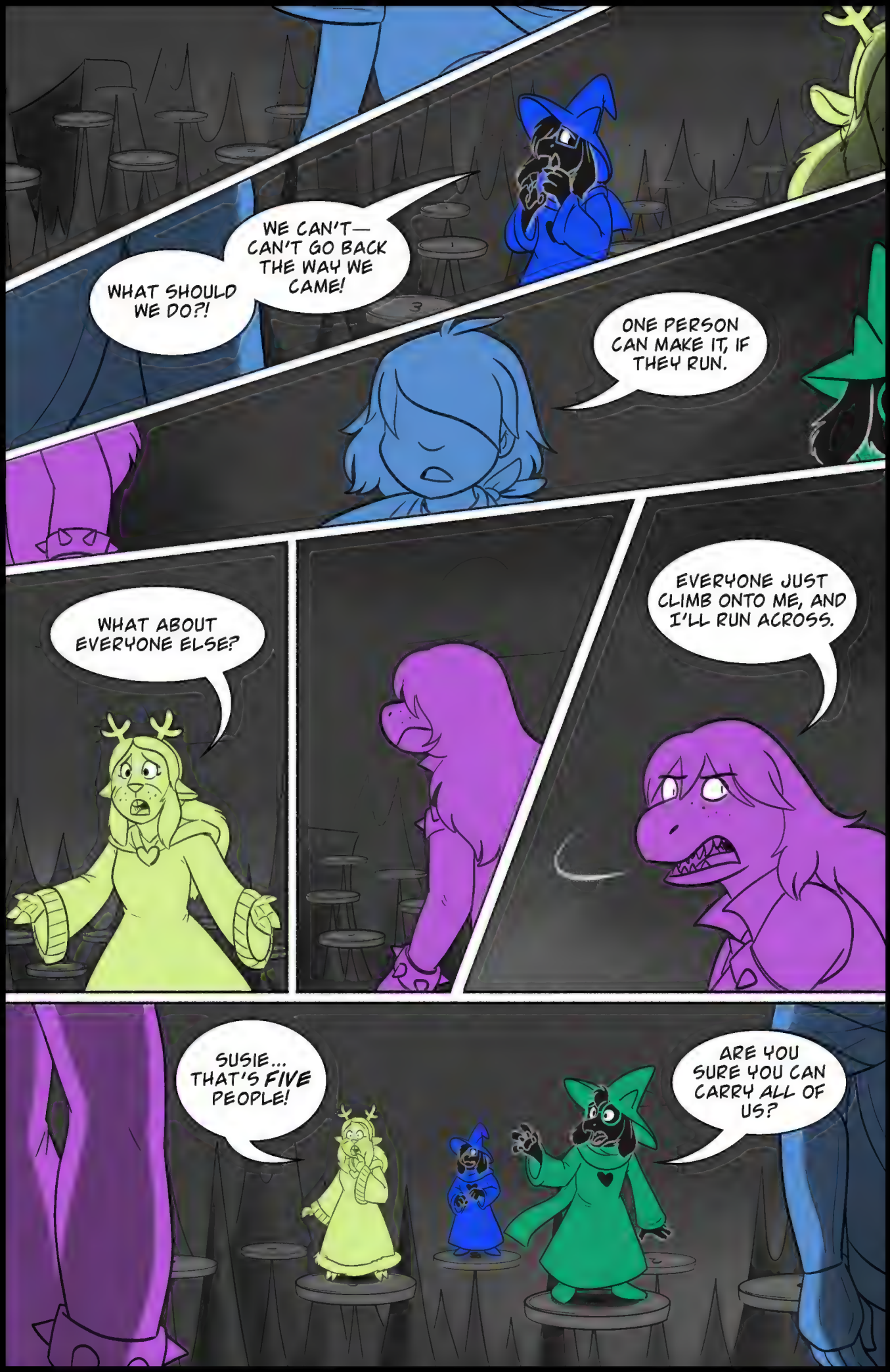
HUH...THIS ONE SEEMS FINE.
WAIT...I GET IT! IT'S A PUZZLE!
THE NUMBERS ARE HOW MANY REMAINING STEPS YOU CAN TAKE BEFORE THE PLATFORM DISAPPEARS!
1
0
2
5
BRILLIANT! I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, NOELLE!
WELL, I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS WAY BEFORE, BUT— SOUNDS CORRECT!
OH GEEZ, IT'S NOT JUST A PUZZLE, BUT A MATH PUZZLE?!
I-I THINK I CAN DO THIS, AT LEAST!
KRIS, I KNOW YOU'RE LEADING...BUT IF YOU EVER NEED HELP WITH THE MATH PART, I CAN HELP.
OKAY.

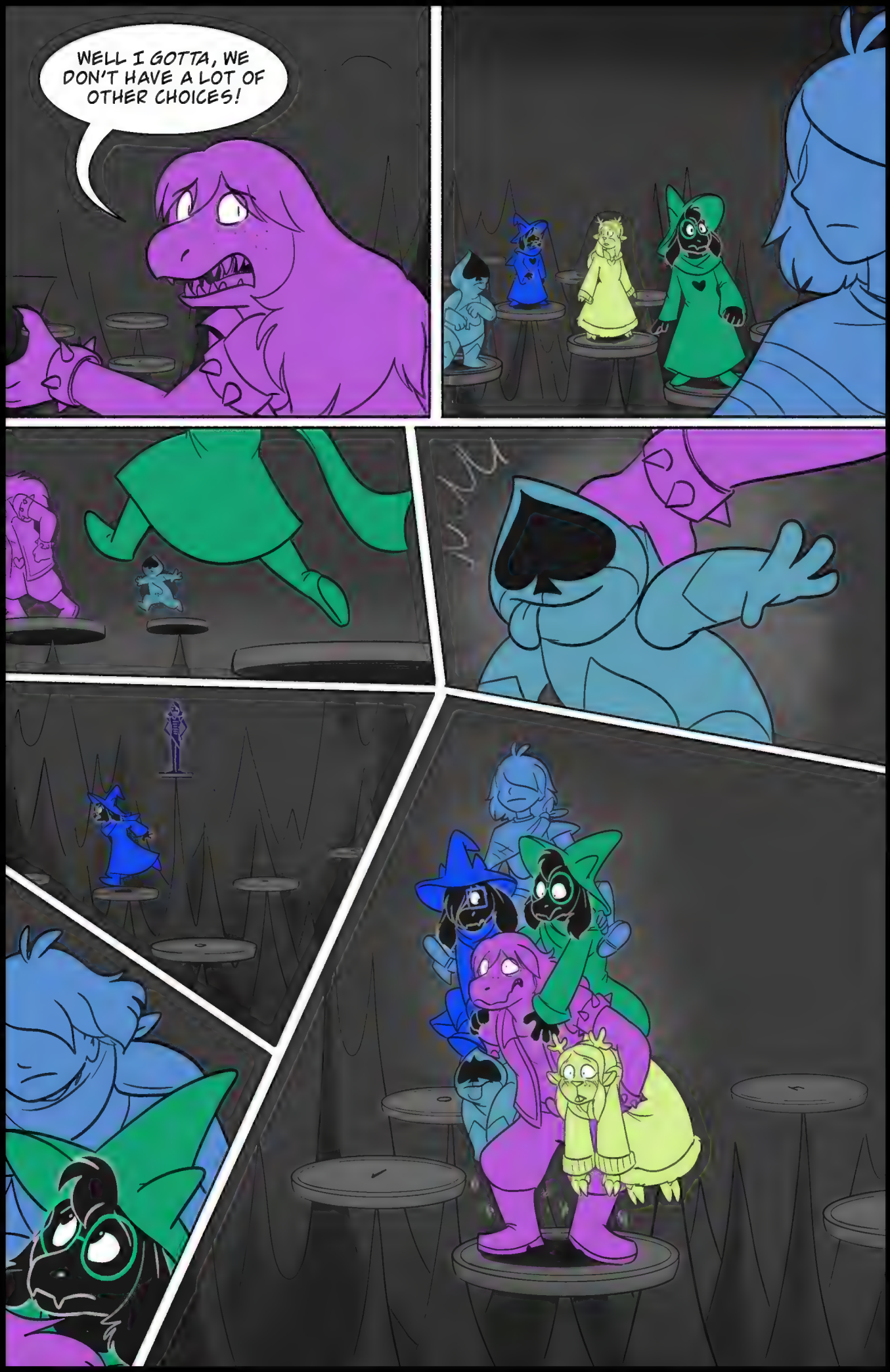
KRIS, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU REALLY DID PICK RIGHT! I'M SORRY IF I—

WAIT.
I DON'T SEE A WAY ACROSS.
ATTENTION, WORMS!!
SO, HEROES! OUR PATHS CROSETH ONCE AGAIN!

OH...WORM?
OH, WOW.
OH, DEAR.
LESSER DAD!
OH NO.
OH.
GUESS WHAT! WE'VE GOT MORE LIGHTNER HEROES NOW AND WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE EVERYONE!
HARRUMPH! THE WONDERFUL ROUXLS KAARD REQUIRESETH NO RESCUING!
SO, UM... WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
I AM TRAPPED ON THIS INFERNAL MOUNTAIN PEAK, THOU BLIND BAT!
YOU STEPPED ALL OVER THIS STUPID PUZZLE BEFORE FIGURING OUT HOW IT WORKED, DIDN'T YOU?

I AM AN EXPERT AT PUZZLES AND THEIR RULES, THANKETH THOU MUCHEST!
'TIS NOT MINE FAULTETH THIS ONE IS POORLY DESIGNED SO!
I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOT MUCH WE CAN DO FROM HERE...WE HAVE TO GET ACROSS AND STOP KING AGAIN BEFORE WE CAN RESCUE YOU.
THOU ART BETTER OFF LEAVING THE MAD KING TO HIS OWN DEVICESETH!
HE IS PREPARED NOW FOR BOTH THOU REASONINGS AND BRUTTE FORCETH!
IN ANY CASE...WE HAVE TO TRY.
WELL, GOOD LUCKETH ESCAPING EVEN THIS POINTED PESTILENCE PUZZLE!


WHAT SHOULD WE DO?!
WE CAN'T— CAN'T GO BACK THE WAY WE CAME!
ONE PERSON CAN MAKE IT, IF THEY RUN.
WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE?
EVERYONE JUST CLIMB ONTO ME, AND I'LL RUN ACROSS.
SUSIE... THAT'S FIVE PEOPLE!
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN CARRY ALL OF US?


WELL I GOTTA, WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF OTHER CHOICES!

Y-YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY?
YUP...IT'S... FFFFFFFFINE!
AAAAAND THREE-TWO-ONE GOING NOW!
POOF
AAAHHH
UHH
AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH
POOF
POOF
POOF

WAAAGGH!
POOF
SEE YOU LATER, LESSER DAAAAAAD~!
EXCELLENT FORM! PERFECT AIM! THOU HAST SOLVED THE PUZZLE, AND...
...LEFT ME TO MY DEVICES.
DAMN IT.

OH—OH GOSH!!
THAT WAS...FUN, BUT MOSTLY REALLY SCARY!
IS THE DARK WORLD ALWAYS LIKE THIS?
OFTEN, BUT...THAT WAS QUITE TENSE, EVEN FOR US!
I'M GONNA NEED A REST BEFORE WE FACE KING AGAIN...
SUSIE...ARE YOU... DO WE HAVE TO HURT MY DAD THIS TIME?
LANCER, IF YOU DON'T WANT US TO, WE WON'T. OKAY?

WAIT! DO YOU MEAN IN FIGHTS WE CAN GET...ACTUALLY FOR REAL HURT?
OR... KILLED?!
YES.
OH NO, I UH...I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THAT...
IT'S OKAY! I HAVE SPELLS THAT CAN HEAL WHENEVER NEEDED!
SORRY, IT JUST...SOUNDS REAL SCARY...
KRIS...?

THERE'S ANOTHER FOUNTAIN.
WHAT IS *THAT?*
OH THAT—YES, THE FOUNTAIN OF DARKNESS!
IT'S BEEN THERE ON BOSS MOBIUS'S ROOFTOP POOL SINCE I CAN REMEMBER BEING HERE.
IT'S HOW WE LEAVE THE DARK WORLD.
SO WE ***HAVE*** TO GO THROUGH KING TO GET HOME.

WE MAY NEED SOME SORT OF STRATEGY, SINCE WE KNOW HE WON'T LISTEN TO REASON... AND WE DON'T WANT TO USE VIOLENCE...
WELL, MAYBE WE COULD—I MEAN, I DUNNO...
WHAT IS IT?
I-I WAS THINKING... MAYBE WE COULD, LIKE —SNEAK ATTACK? TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE, I MEAN?
SO YOU CAN CATCH HIM WITHOUT FIGHTING, SO...M-MAYBE NOT...
NO, SARELI, THAT SOUNDS SMART! HOW CAN WE DO THIS?
WELL, WE'RE UH—ALREADY HERE AT THE BACK ENTRANCE! I ACTUALLY KNOW MY WAY—
I HAVE A GOOD IDEA OF HOW TO GET AROUND TOWN HALL, BECAUSE...WELL, BOSS MOBIUS WILL ONLY LET ME NEAR THE FOUNTAIN...

SO WE CAN GO IN A BACK ROUTE AND PUT KING TO SLEEP WITHOUT HIM EVEN KNOWING! THAT'S PERFECT!
HUH, THAT'S ACTUALLY USEFUL, BLUEBERRY.
OH, WELL I... DON'T THANK ME YET!
YEAH, HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, CHUMPS. NO GETTIN' IN HERE.
DON'T WORRY, WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOUR BOSS!
EH, NEVER LIKED THAT GUY ANYWAY.

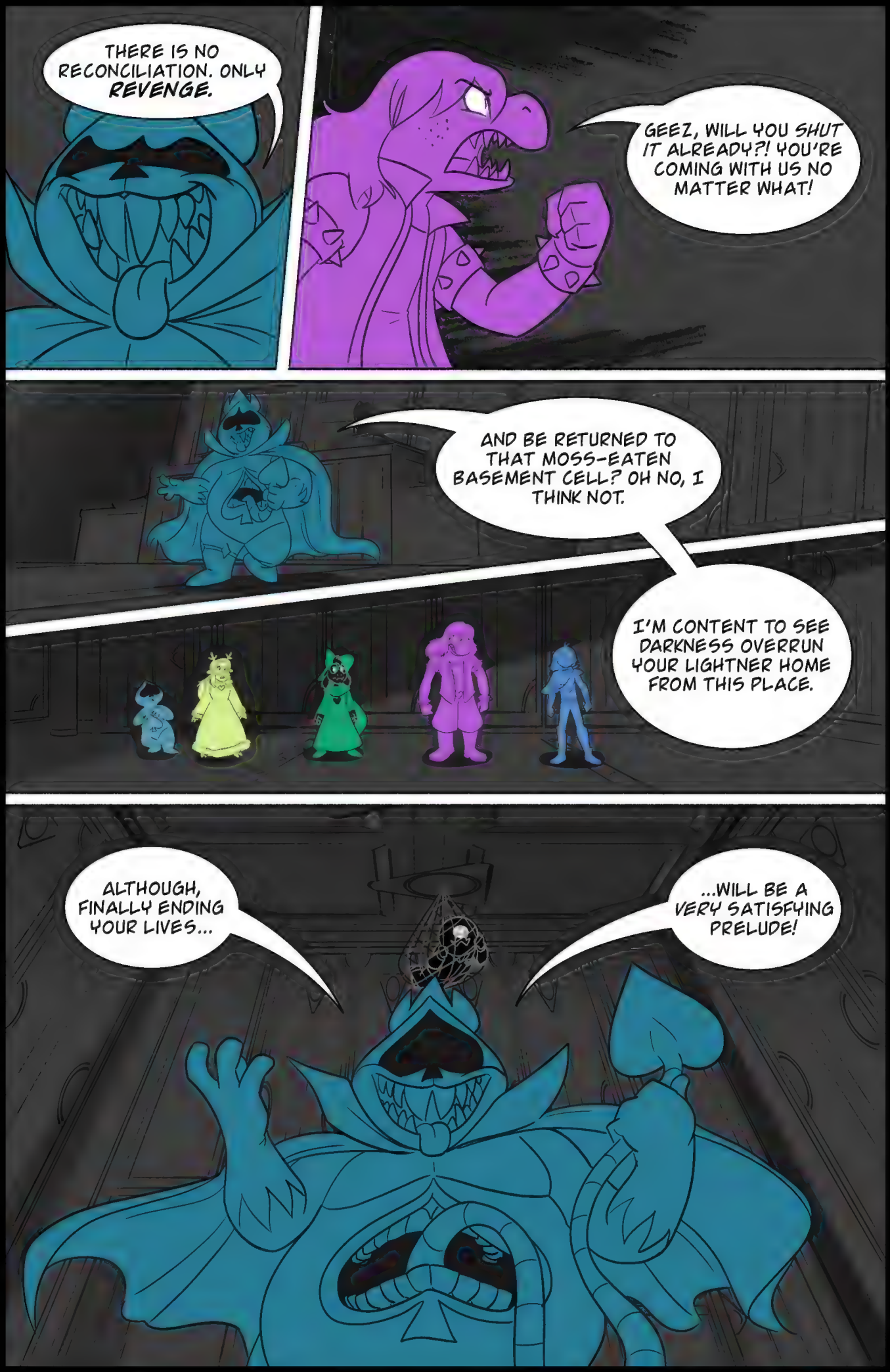
EXCUSE ME, BUT I UH...NEED TO GET IN TO INSPECT THE FOUNTAIN?
DON'T CARE, CHUMP.
OH HEY, SOUNDS LIKE A SPORTS IS STARTING AT THE STADIUM!
SPORTS?! I'LL CATCH YOU CHUMPS LATER!
SHOOOM
...SEEMS LIKE ALL THESE GUYS ONLY GOT ONE HOBBY.

THE BOSS'S OFFICE IS JUST THROUGH HERE, SO—IF WE'RE ALL QUIET, WE CAN...MAYBE SNEAK UP...
WOAH... LOOKIT THAT!!

OUTLOOK NOT SO GOOD!
WELL, LANCER. NOW LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE.
MY STUPID, SPINELESS SON.

I-I'M SORRY! I MESSED IT UP AGAIN, I—
LEAVE LANCER ALONE!
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, SON. YOU LET THESE LIGHTNERS IN, AND SEE WHAT THEY'VE DONE?
DESTROYED OUR KINGDOM. SCATTERED IT.
N-NO, THEY DIDN'T MEAN—
AND SEE NOW? YOU'RE WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON THEM! A USELESS, DISCARDABLE PLAYTHING THEY DRAG AROUND FROM PLACE TO PLACE.
I'M...NOT USELESS!...

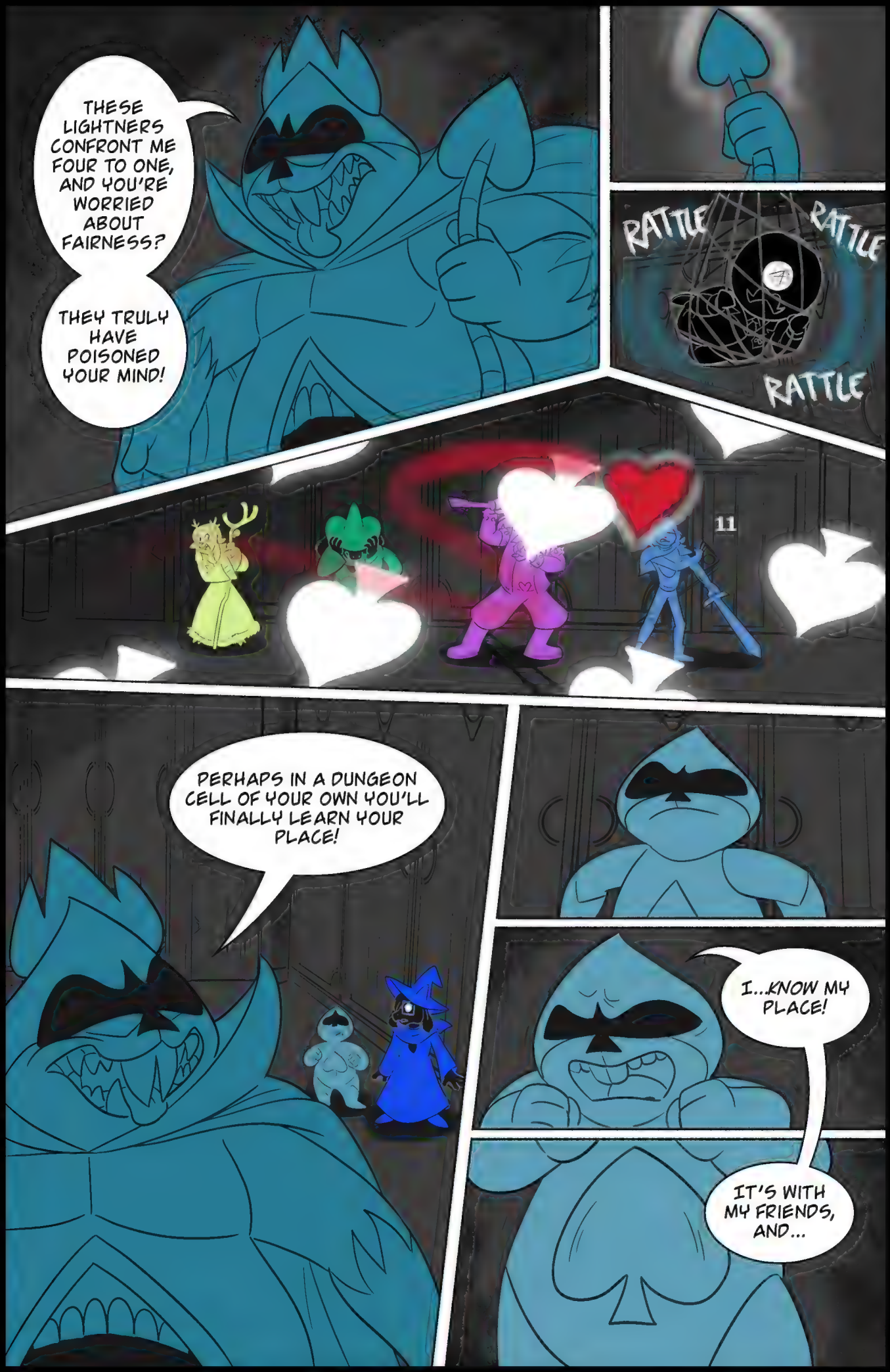
H-HOW CAN YOU TALK TO YOUR OWN CHILD THAT WAY?!
NOT YOUR CONCERN. HE SHOULD KNOW HIS PLACE BY NOW!
BUT HE ALWAYS WAS A SLOW LEARNER.
NOT THAT THE LESSON MATTERS NOW. YOUR EFFORTS ARE FUTILE.
IT'S YOU WHO HASN'T LEARNED, KING!
AS LONG AS WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, THERE'S STILL HOPE!
NAIVE PRINCE! HOW MANY FOUNTAINS OF DARKNESS HAVE YOU COME ACROSS NOW?
YOUR DREAMS OF BALANCE BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS ARE BEYOND HOPE.


THERE IS NO RECONCILIATION. ONLY REVENGE.
GEEZ, WILL YOU SHUT IT ALREADY?! YOU'RE COMING WITH US NO MATTER WHAT!
AND BE RETURNED TO THAT MOSS-EATEN BASEMENT CELL? OH NO, I THINK NOT.
I'M CONTENT TO SEE DARKNESS OVERRUN YOUR LIGHTNER HOME FROM THIS PLACE.
ALTHOUGH, FINALLY ENDING YOUR LIVES...
...WILL BE A VERY SATISFYING PRELUDE!

* King blocks the way!
Talk
KING...I KNOW YOU'VE BECOME THIS WAY OUT OF DEVOTION TO YOUR KINGDOM!
SURELY WE CAN FIND COMMON GROUND THERE?
MY GROUND IS ABOVE YOURS, FOOLISH PRINCE!

RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
CONCENTRATE AND ASK AGAIN!
HEY—WAIT! NONE OF US GOT OUR TURN!
13
28

AND WITH THIS MOB BOSS'S ABILITY TO REPEAT TURNS UNDER MY COMMAND...
YOU NEVER WILL!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
CONCENTRATE AND ASK AGAIN!
WHAT DO WE DO, KRIS? WE CAN'T JUST DODGE FOREVER!
DAD, THAT'S NOT FAIR FIGHTING!


THESE LIGHTNERS CONFRONT ME FOUR TO ONE, AND YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT FAIRNESS?
THEY TRULY HAVE POISONED YOUR MIND!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
11
PERHAPS IN A DUNGEON CELL OF YOUR OWN YOU'LL FINALLY LEARN YOUR PLACE!
I...KNOW MY PLACE!
IT'S WITH MY FRIENDS, AND...

NNGH
IT'S...AS...A RULER!
BECAUSE... EVERYONE...SHOWED ME...
...THE STRONGEST RULERS HAVE FRIENDS TO RELY ON!
TWIP TWIP TWIP
WHAT?!—

BWONK!
WITHOUT A DOUBT!
RRRAAGH!!
NOELLE HP
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Reir
Let It Snow

GAHHH!
CLANG!!

NOELLE! YOU DID IT!
YOU...YOU LEAVE US ALONE, NOW!
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Reindeer
Let It Snow

...YOU WILL FALL TODAY—!
Silver Bells
Red-Nosed Reindeer
Let It Snow

DONG
DONG
DONG
DAMN, NOELLE, YOU'RE KILLING IT!
EVEN BETTER— YOU'RE PACIFYING IT!
STILL... USELESS!
I'LL SOONER DIE THAN BE CARRIED AWAY AS YOUR PLAYTHING!
SARELI! I NEED YOUR HELP!
YOU—OH NO, NOT ME! I'M NO HELP TO ANYONE!
YES YOU ARE!

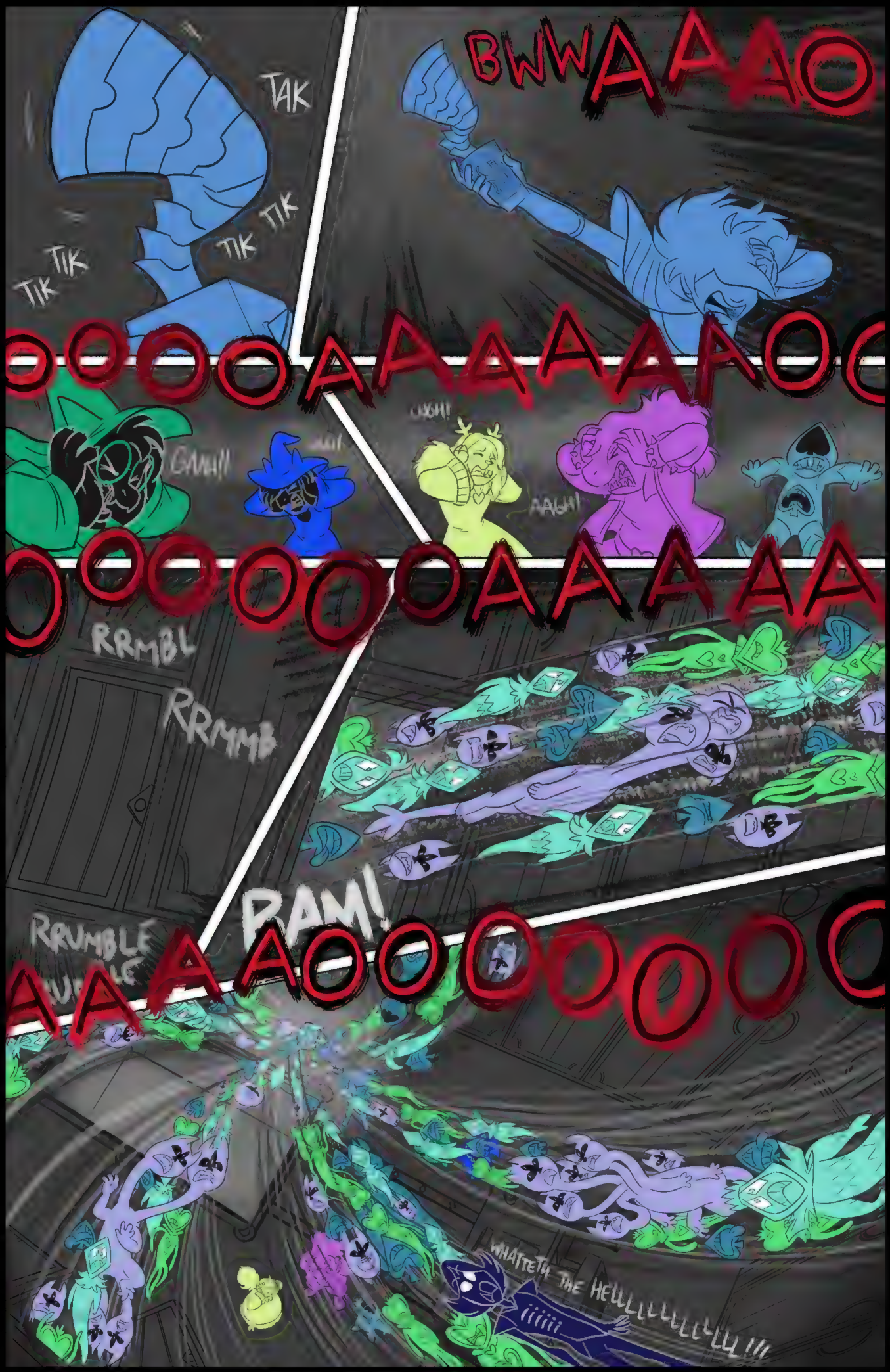
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND—I'M DOOMED TO FAILURE! I KNOW IT!
AND I KNOW THAT TOGETHER, WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FAIL!
YOU...STILL NOTHING TO SAY?
I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO SCREAM ABOUT, LIGHTNER—

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?!
?
ANSWER ME, LIGHTNER! WHERE'D YOU GET THAT?!
A GIFT.
BUT HE SAID...HE SAID IT WAS HIDDEN IN ANOTHER LAND!
THAT THEY'D NEVER FIND IT...

DO IT NOW.
I DON'T... UNDERSTAND...
MY KNIGHT...
WHY DID...YOU LIE?...
THUNK
Pacify

* You won!
SUSIE, SUSIE LOOK! I DID IT! I CAN DO THE THING! I FINALLY GOT IT!!
LANCER, THAT WAS THE MOST BADASS THING I'VE EVER SEEN!
IS...THAT WAS ALL GOOD?
HELL YEAH IT WAS!
I MEAN...YOU REALLY SAVED OUR NECKS, TOO!
I JUST...CAN'T BELIEVE I DID IT!
I WAS SO SCARED, I COULDN'T STOP SHAKING, BUT...I STILL REALLY DID IT!
I KNEW YOU TWO COULD!

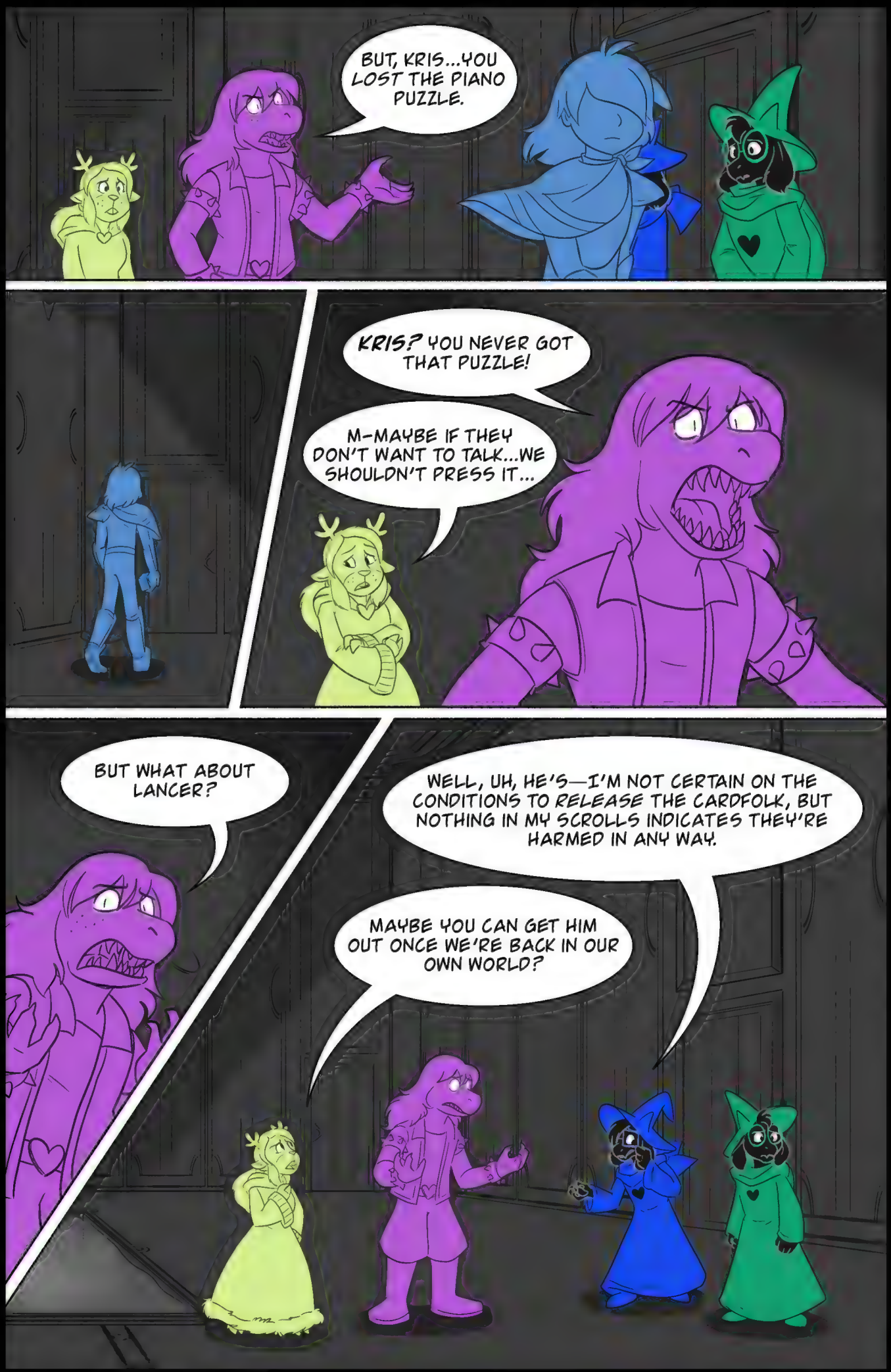
I'M SO GLAD WE MANAGED ANOTHER PEACEFUL SOLUTION!
AND THAT THINGS ACTUALLY WENT RIGHT FOR ONCE!
Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z
AND NOW THAT WE'VE PEACEFULLY DISPATCHED THE KING, WE CAN SAFELY FIND EVERYONE AND BRING THEM TO THE FOUNTAIN!
ALTHOUGH...IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE THE TASK FINDING THEM ALL...
IS THAT WHAT KING WAS YELLING ABOUT?
KRIS, WHAT IS THAT THING?
DON'T KNOW.
CLICK!


TAK
TIK
TIK
TIK
TIK
TIK
BWWAAAO
OOOOOAAAAAAAAOO
GAHH!
UGH!
AAUH!
RRMBL
RRMMB
RRUMBLE
BAM!
AAAAOOOOOOO
WHATTETH THE HELLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!

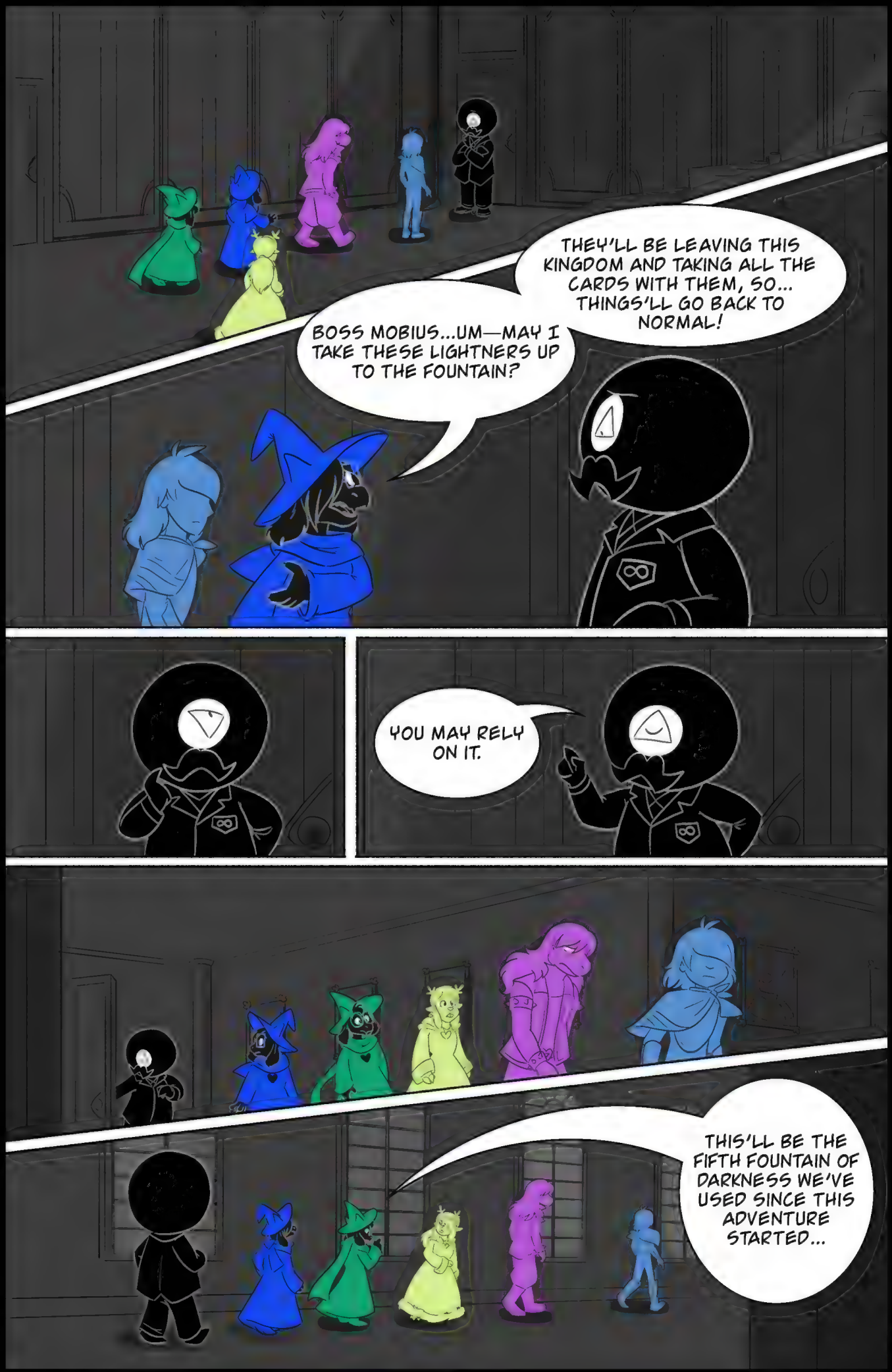
OOAAAAAAAOOOOO
WH-WH-WHOOOAH, SUSIEEEEE!
OOOAAAAAAAAAwwwooooo
WAS...THAT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN?

LANCER! LANCER, ARE YOU THERE?
YOU OKAY?! ANSWER ME!!
WHAT'D YOU DO?! GET HIM OUTTA THERE!
I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU HAD IT!
CLICK
CLICK
O-OH WAIT, UM— EXCUSE ME...
OH, GOODNESS, THIS LOOKS LIKE A 52 PICKUP! AN INCREDIBLY RARE, VERY POWERFUL TREASURE!

A POWERFUL TREASURE?
YES! I'VE GOT SOME OLD SCROLLS IN MY HOME OF SUCH ARTIFACTS...
LEGEND SAYS IT CAN SUMMON FORTH AND ENCASE CARDFOLK FROM MILES AWAY!
...NO WONDER THE KING WAS SO... AFRAID OF IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE HAD IT WITH YOU! THE S2 PICKUP IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN LOST AGES AGO, TAKEN TO ANOTHER KINGDOM.
WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
SERIOUSLY, KRIS, WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
IT'S ALL RIGHT TO TELL US, KRIS.
...THE PIANO PUZZLE.


BUT, KRIS...YOU LOST THE PIANO PUZZLE.
KRIS? YOU NEVER GOT THAT PUZZLE!
M-MAYBE IF THEY DON'T WANT TO TALK...WE SHOULDN'T PRESS IT...
BUT WHAT ABOUT LANCER?
WELL, UH, HE'S—I'M NOT CERTAIN ON THE CONDITIONS TO RELEASE THE CARDFOLK, BUT NOTHING IN MY SCROLLS INDICATES THEY'RE HARMED IN ANY WAY.
MAYBE YOU CAN GET HIM OUT ONCE WE'RE BACK IN OUR OWN WORLD?

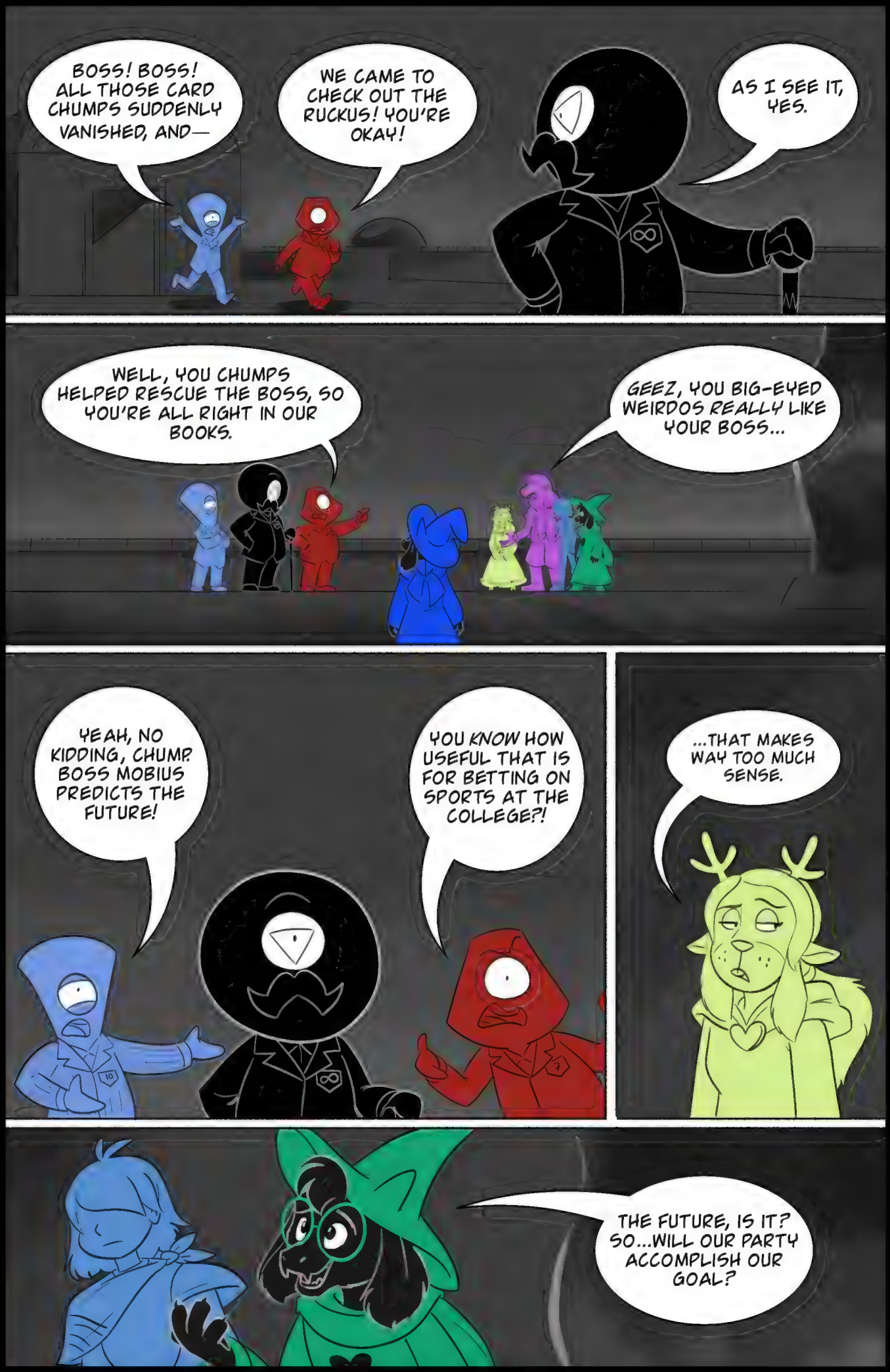
IF THAT TREASURE REALLY DOES HAVE ALL OF THE CARDFOLK...WE DON'T NEED TO TRACK THEM ALL DOWN, BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL HERE.
THAT'S, UM— CONVENIENT!
WAY TOO CONVENIENT FOR ME.
DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD...TRY TO FIGURE THIS OUT BEFORE WE GO?
GRROWL
...NO. WE BEAT KING, THE FOUNTAIN'S RIGHT OVER US, SO IF WE'VE REALLY GOT ALL THE CARDS... WE SHOULD GO.
...HE'LL BE FINE. HE'S TOUGH.


THEY'LL BE LEAVING THIS KINGDOM AND TAKING ALL THE CARDS WITH THEM, SO... THINGS'LL GO BACK TO NORMAL!
BOSS MOBIUS...UM—MAY I TAKE THESE LIGHTNERS UP TO THE FOUNTAIN?
YOU MAY RELY ON IT.
THIS'LL BE THE FIFTH FOUNTAIN OF DARKNESS WE'VE USED SINCE THIS ADVENTURE STARTED...

THAT'S QUITE A NUMBER OF KINGDOMS.
I'M MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE BALANCE BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK.
THE DARKNESS MUST BE OVERTAKING THE LIGHT WORLD...
UNLESS...MAYBE YOU HAVE MORE FOUNTAINS OF LIGHT THERE THAN I THOUGHT?
RALSEI, WE DON'T HAVE LIGHT FOUNTAINS.
...WHAT?
OUR WORLD ISN'T MADE BY FOUNTAINS OR WHATEVER, IT'S JUST THERE.
WE'VE ONLY SEEN THOSE WEIRD PORTAL FOUNTAINS IN THE DARK WORLD.
THE KNIGHT WHO PULLS THE FOUNTAINS FROM THE EARTH...

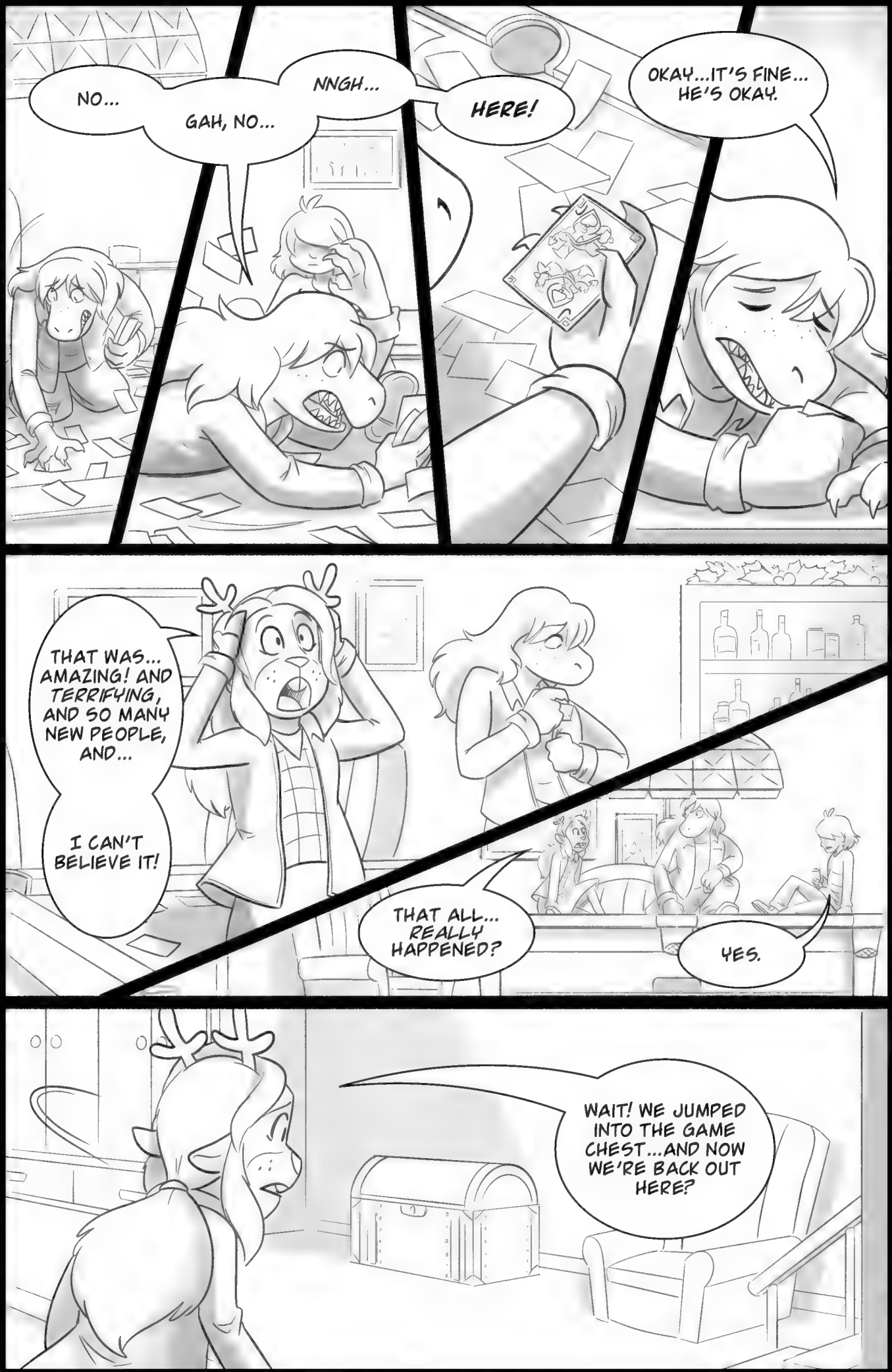
RALSEI, ARE YOU OKAY?
OH...YES, NOELLE, I'M FINE!
JUST...A LITTLE WORRIED, BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE I'M MISSING SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
I'M SORRY...I WISH I COULD HELP, BUT I KNOW THE LEAST ABOUT THIS PLACE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT! IF YOU CONTINUE TO BE THERE FOR KRIS IN THE LIGHT WORLD, IT'S ALL I NEED.
I MAY NEED TO RETHINK SOME THINGS, BUT I STILL BELIEVE...
...THAT KRIS'S SOUL IS THE KEY.

SARELI...THANK YOU FOR HELPING US.
I HOPE YOU'LL HAVE A BIT MORE FAITH IN YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE! WE REALLY COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.
I'LL...TRY TO REMEMBER THAT!
JUST, YOU KNOW— WHEN YOU'VE GOT A PROPHECY ON YOUR MIND ALL THE TIME...
I KNOW, BUT MAYBE PROPHECIES AREN'T REALLY AS RELIABLE AS YOU'D THINK!


BOSS! BOSS! ALL THOSE CARD CHUMPS SUDDENLY VANISHED, AND—
WE CAME TO CHECK OUT THE RUCKUS! YOU'RE OKAY!
AS I SEE IT, YES.
WELL, YOU CHUMPS HELPED RESCUE THE BOSS, SO YOU'RE ALL RIGHT IN OUR BOOKS.
GEEZ, YOU BIG-EYED WEIRDOS REALLY LIKE YOUR BOSS...
YEAH, NO KIDDING, CHUMP. BOSS MOBIUS PREDICTS THE FUTURE!
YOU KNOW HOW USEFUL THAT IS FOR BETTING ON SPORTS AT THE COLLEGE?!
...THAT MAKES WAY TOO MUCH SENSE.
THE FUTURE, IS IT? SO...WILL OUR PARTY ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL?

RATTLE
RATTLE
IT IS CERTAIN.
THAT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER!
LOT BETTER THAN THOSE STUPID PAINTINGS SAYING SOMEONE WAS GOING TO DESTROY THEIR HOME OR WHATEVER.
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
SIGNS POINT TO YES.
WE SHOULD GO.

HEY! WHAT'D THOSE CHUMPS DO TO THE FOUNTAIN?!
YEAH, IT'S ALL RAINBOW-COLOR SOMETHIN'!
RATTLE
RATTLE
BETTER NOT TELL YOU NOW.
THUNK!!
OH. MY. GOODNESS...


NO...
GAH, NO...
NNGH...
HERE!
OKAY...IT'S FINE... HE'S OKAY.
THAT WAS... AMAZING! AND TERRIFYING, AND SO MANY NEW PEOPLE, AND...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
THAT ALL... REALLY HAPPENED?
YES.
WAIT! WE JUMPED INTO THE GAME CHEST...AND NOW WE'RE BACK OUT HERE?

WE DON'T USUALLY LEAVE THE DARK WORLD IN THE SAME PLACE WE GOT INTO IT.
WHEN WE LEFT— W-WAIT!
MY MOM!
. . .
DON'T...HEAR ANYONE...
THANK GOODNESS...I GUESS SHE WENT BACK TO WORK...
LET'S GET THESE CARDS TOGETHER AND GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE SHE GETS BACK.

SO...THESE ARE ALL THE THINGS YOU NEED TO BRING BACK TO SCHOOL AND GET LANCER'S KINGDOM BACK?
THERE'S STILL A FEW MORE GUYS WE GOTTA FIND.
I'LL HELP YOU FIND THEM!
WAIT, BUT... YOU *SURE*? YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS THE DARK WORLD GETS!
I...I WAS ABLE TO HELP BEAT THE SPADE KING, WASN'T I?
I WANT TO... KEEP HELPING YOU.
I MEAN...I GUESS IT'S UP TO KRIS, THEY'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN GET US IN AND OUT OF THE DARK WORLD.
YOU HAVE TO BE SURE. IT'LL BE DANGEROUS.
AS LONG AS YOU TWO ARE WITH ME...I KNOW I'LL BE SAFE!

OKAY.
SO...WHERE'S THE REST OF THE PEOPLE YOU NEED TO FIND?
AT THE CHURCH.
OH, THAT'S PERFECT! TOMORROW'S SUNDAY, SO WE CAN ALL GO TO CHURCH TOGETHER AND THEN LOOK FOR YOUR FRIENDS IN THE DARK WORLD AFTER!
WAIT... WHAT?
...OH.
YOU WEREN'T... JUST PLANNING ON *BREAKING IN*, WERE YOU?
IT'S WORKED FINE SO FAR!

LIKE...TODAY. BREAKING INTO THE MAYOR'S HOUSE.
I'M GUESSING YOU GUYS BROKE THE ICE-E PIZZA PLACE DOOR, TOO?
SIGH
IT'D BE LESS SUSPICIOUS IF WE WERE ALREADY THERE.
BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN TO CHURCH BEFORE! I DUNNO HOW ANY OF THAT STUFF WORKS!
DON'T WORRY, KRIS AND I KNOW ENOUGH THAT YOU'LL BE FINE! DO YOU HAVE A DRESS?
NO! I STOPPED WEARING DRESSES WHEN I WAS SEVEN!
OH, WELL, MY AUNT BLITZY HAS SOME OLD OUTFITS HERE FOR WHEN SHE VISITS! I BET ONE OF THEM WOULD FIT YOU!
UHHHHH...

HERE, COME ON, LET'S FIND SOMETHING FOR YOU QUICK, BEFORE MY MOM GETS BACK!
UHHHH...

DEAR SECRET DIARY
MOM AND DAD ARE SPLITTING UP.
MOM'S JUST TOO ANGRY ABOUT WHAT
HE SAID AND DID. AND DAD JUST...
ACCEPTED IT. HE JUST SAID "OKAY" AND
HE'S PACKING HIS THINGS TO GO LIVE AT
THE SHOP.
I HATE THIS. I WAS TRYING SO HARD, IN
SCHOOL, IN CHOIR, IN TRACK, TAKING CARE
OF KRIS, IN EVERYTHING! WHY DID NOTHING
I DO ACTUALLY FIX THIS? WHAT [redacted] WAS THE
POINT [redacted] OF IT ALL?!
I FIGURED IF I WAS PERFECT FOR THEM,
FOR KRIS... IT'D MAKE THEM STOP BEING
ANGRY AT EACH OTHER, THEY COULD JUST BE
PROUD INSTEAD.
STUPID. [redacted] STUPID OF ME TO THINK I COUL
CHANGE ANYTHING.
★ASRIEL★

THERE YOU ARE, KRIS!
I ALMOST THOUGHT YOU WOULD NOT BE HERE FOR DINNER!
I WAS...
HOME SWEET HOME
I KNOW, YOU DID TELL ME YOU WOULD BE OUT WITH FRIENDS TODAY. BUT YOU COULD AT LEAST CALL ME TO CHECK IN!
WE MAY NEED TO REPLACE THAT CELL PHONE OF YOURS IF THE RECEPTION IS THIS BAD.
CLICK
...SORRY.

IT IS ALL RIGHT. BUT TOMORROW, I WANT YOU TO STAY HOME. YOU HAVE BEEN OUT FOR SO MUCH OF THIS WEEK, I HAVE BARELY SEEN YOU!
AND I WANT TO LOOK OVER YOUR HOMEWORK TOMORROW AFTERNOON WITH YOU AND MAKE SURE YOU ARE NOT STRUGGLING.
BUT...
AND I AM VERY CONCERNED ABOUT ALL THESE WEIRD THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN HAPPENING AROUND TOWN! THE MAYOR HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT STARTING AN INVESTIGATION!
IT IS SIMPLY NOT SAFE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW, AND I KNOW YOUR PENCHANT FOR MISCHIEF...
I JUST...
KRIS? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I WANTED TO...GO TO CHURCH TOMORROW MORNING.
AND THEN ME AND TWO FRIENDS...WERE GOING TO ASK FATHER ALVIN IF WE COULD HELP CLEAN UP THE CHURCH ATTIC...

OH, WELL THAT IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
HOME
YES, OF COURSE YOU CAN COME TO CHURCH TOMORROW!
I AM SURE FATHER ALVIN WOULD LOVE THE HELP!
I AM SO HAPPY YOU WANT TO COME!
HERE, LET US GO UPSTAIRS, YOU CAN PICK OUT AN OUTFIT AND I WILL CLEAN AND IRON IT FOR TOMORROW!

I REMEMBER AS A CHILD YOU WERE SO INSISTENT ON THE RIGHT OUTFIT!
EITHER A PERFECT MATCH WITH YOUR BROTHER, OR THE PERFECT OPPOSITE. IT WAS SO ADORABLE!
SO, WHICH WOULD YOU LIKE FOR TOMORROW, SWEETIE?
Slacks Dress
Slacks Dress
Slacks Dress
Dress
NNNGH

L-LOOK...HOW ABOUT YOU WEAR THE SLACKS TOMORROW?
AND I WILL IRON BOTH, JUST IN CASE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.
...OKAY.
I AM SO GLAD YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SERVICES AGAIN, KRIS!
HONESTLY...SEEMS LIKE THEY GET THAT INABILITY TO DECIDE FROM THEIR FATHER.

UH-OH!
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED IN HERE, LITTLE GUY!
LET'S GET YOU BACK OUT HERE WITH YOUR FAMILY, WHERE YOU BELONG.

CRUNCH
CRRCH
SLRP
CRUNCH
CRIH
SLRP
A RACCOON...?

HFF
HELLO?
CLICK!
THAT'S STRANGE...

AAAUGH!
CLATTER
SKITTER
WHH—

WHH—
WHAT?!...
H-
HELP!!...
NNNNGH...
UUGGH!!

HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF...
HF....

LET US OUT
SLAM

Chapter Six

Lairse

LOOKS LIKE RAIN, DOESN'T IT?
HELLO-
WELCOME!

I AM SURE YOU WANT TO MEET UP WITH YOUR FRIENDS, RIGHT KRIS?
YES.

I WILL SAVE YOU ALL A SEAT INSIDE, DEAR.
HELLO! WELCOME!

IS THAT TIE STRAIGHT?
YES, BUT...

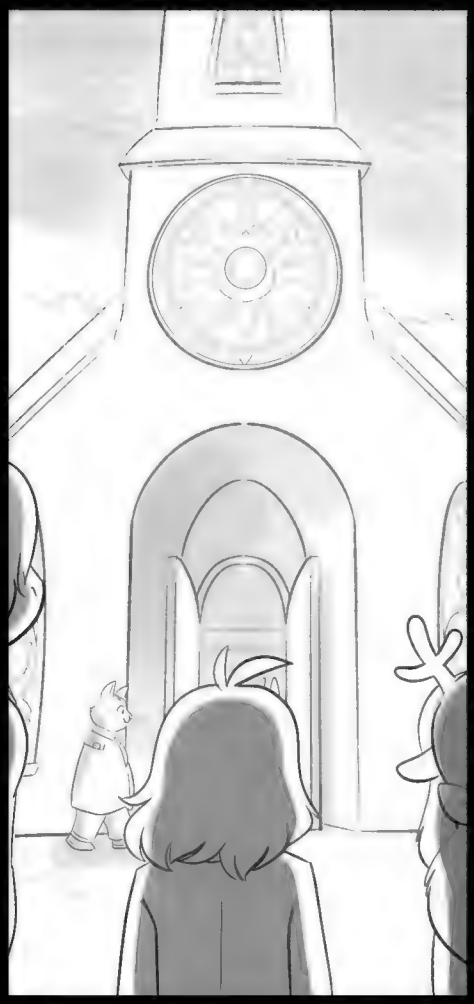
AND YOU HAVE THE GATE KEY THIS TIME?
YES, MOM. IT'S IN MY PURSE.
WELL, I STILL EXPECT YOU TO CALL AS SOON AS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE DONE.
I WILL, MOM.
THANK YOU... FOR LETTING ME DO THIS.
COMMUNITY SERVICE IS GOOD FOR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS.
AND THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I'M LETTING YESTERDAY SLIDE, YOUNG LADY.
YES, MOM.
WHERE'S SUSIE?

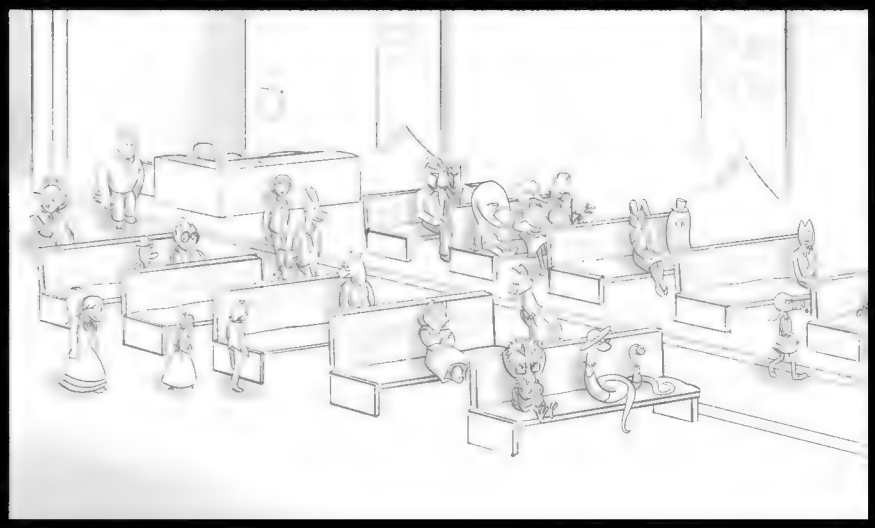
SUSIE, COME ON, IT'S GONNA START SOON!
NO! NOT GOING!
SHFF
SUSIE, I PROMISE YOU LOOK FINE!
NO I DON'T! I LOOK STUPID! THIS IS STUPID!
IT'S NOT! I MEAN...YOU'RE NOT AFRAID, ARE YOU?
...NO!!
SHFF
SFF
THEN COME ON, IT'LL BE FINE!
FSSHS

GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP
GRUMP

SEE, KRIS? I THINK SHE LOOKS NICE.

THIS BETTER GO REAL FAST.

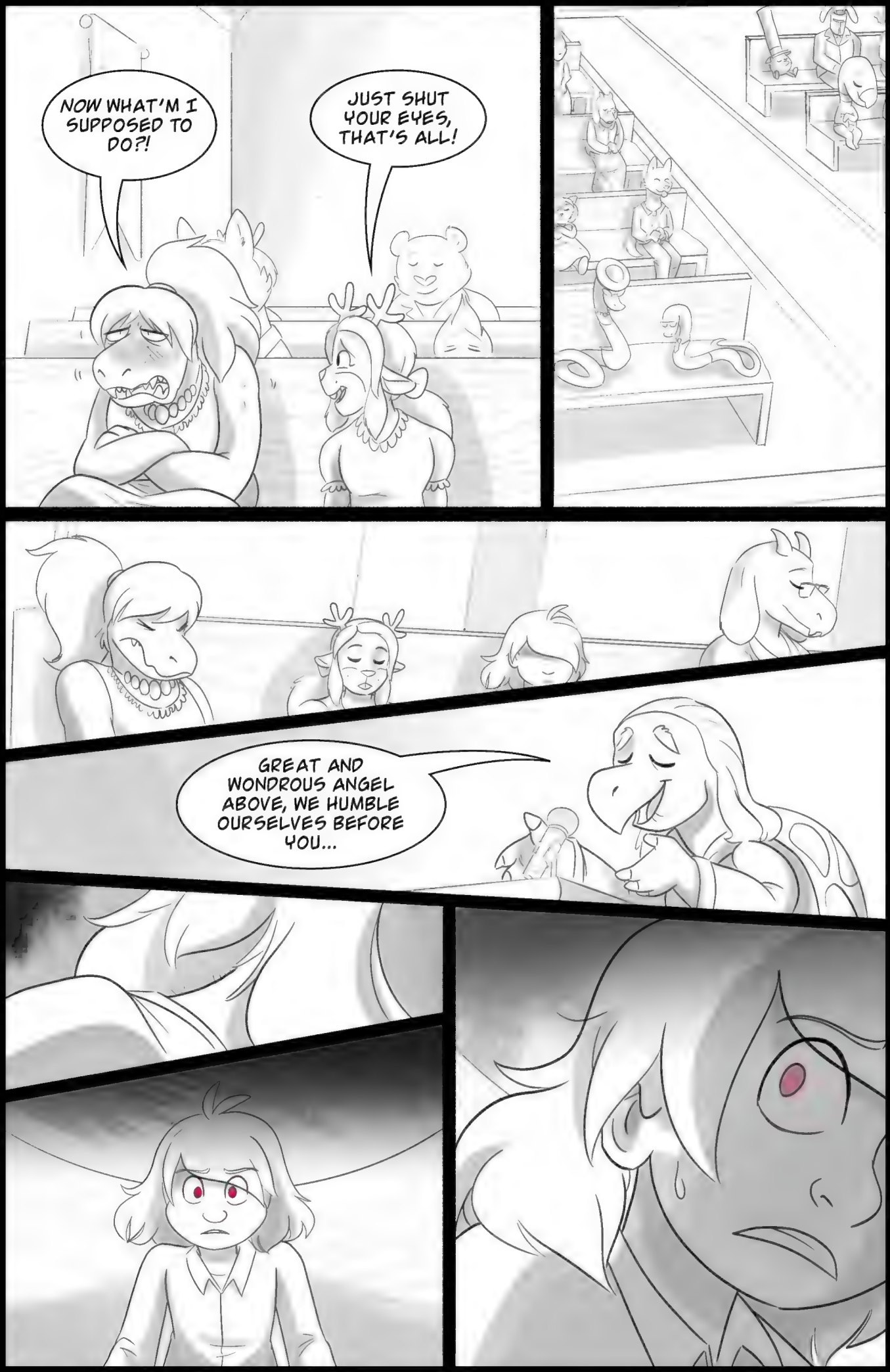




WONDERFUL TO HAVE YOU HERE AGAIN, KRIS!
PAT PAT
GOOD MORNING, ALL! SO LOVELY TO SEE ALL YOUR FACES THIS MORNING.
THE STEADFAST LOVE O
EVEN SOME NEW ONES!
LET'S BEGIN TODAY WITH SOME SONGS OF PRAISE...
NEVER CEASES~ MERCIES NEVER TO AN END
WHAT'M I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING?!
NOTHING, JUST LISTEN TO IT.

AND FOR TODAY'S OPENING READING, PLEASE OPEN TO CHAPTER FIVE, VERSE THREE—
DEER PANTS FOR THE
MY SOUL LONGS AFTER
AND NOW FOR THIS WEE ANNOUNCEM
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
NOW WHAT'S THIS?
SICK FRUIT JUICE.
YOU GET FREE FOOD AT CHURCH?!!

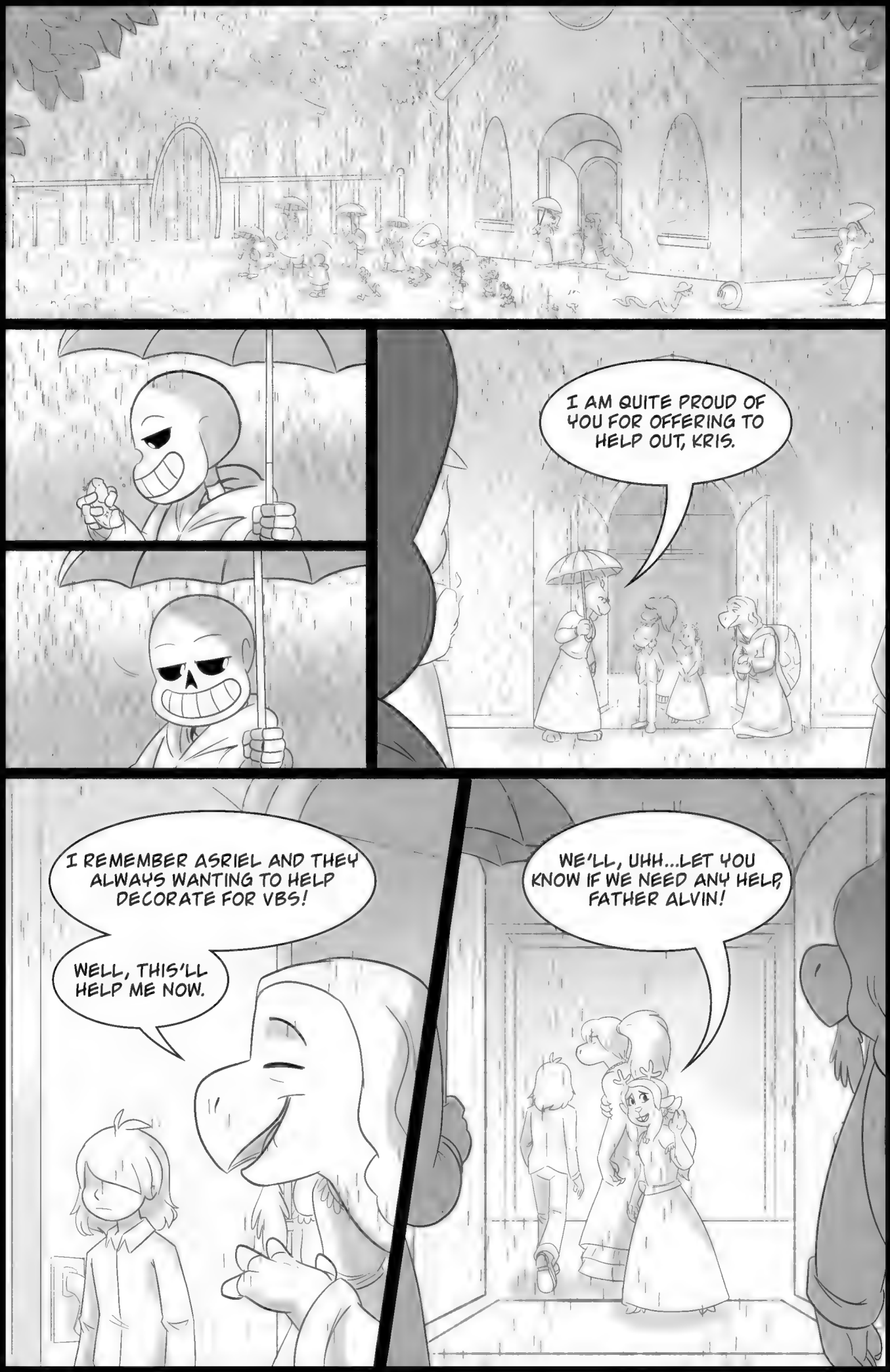
GULP
GULP!
CRUNCH
CHOMP!
CHMP
CHOMP
GULP
SUSIE, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO EAT THAT UNLESS—
OH...N-NEVER MIND...IT'S GONE NOW...
THAT. WAS NOT FRUIT JUICE.
GUUUUUHHH
AND NOW, BEFORE TODAY'S SERMON, LET US BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER...


NOW WHAT'M I SUPPOSED TO DO?!
JUST SHUT YOUR EYES, THAT'S ALL!
GREAT AND WONDROUS ANGEL ABOVE, WE HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE YOU...

BLESS US, SO THAT WE MAY LIVE LIVES OF VIRTUE.
OF KINDNESS AND COURAGE,
OF PATIENCE AND INTEGRITY...
LET US TREAT OUR NEIGHBORS WITH COMPASSION, THAT WE MAY RECEIVE COMPASSION IN RETURN...

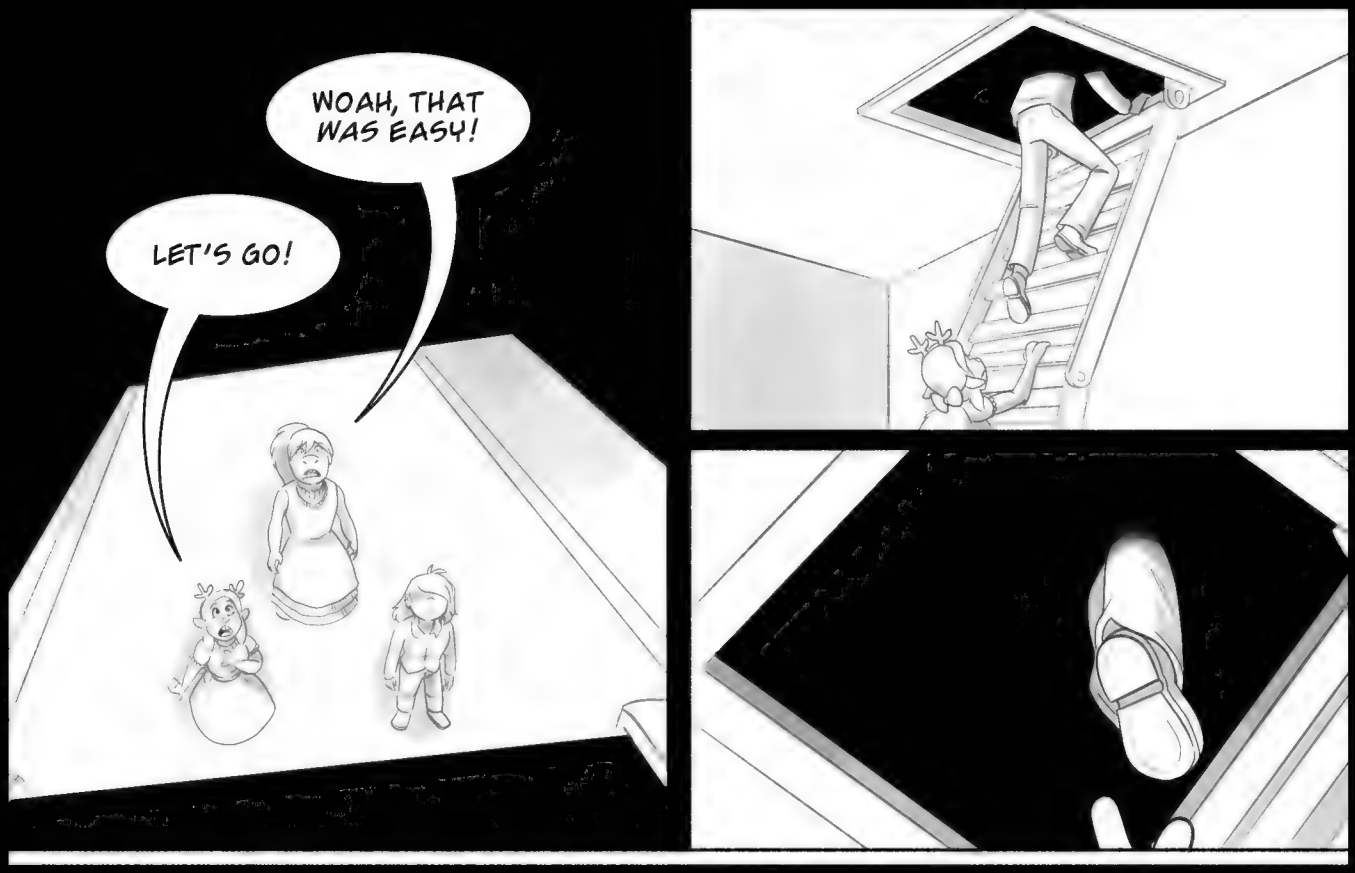
HHH
GHH
AND WHEN WE STUMBLE, GRANT US FORGIVENESS FOR OUR SINS, BOTH BIG AND SMALL...
HFF
WE PRAY THAT YOUR KINGDOM COMES TO US SOON,
AND THAT YOU TOUCH US WITH YOUR GRACE...
GHHF

AMEN.
THAT WAS IT?
KINDA BORING.


I AM QUITE PROUD OF YOU FOR OFFERING TO HELP OUT, KRIS.
I REMEMBER ASRIEL AND THEY ALWAYS WANTING TO HELP DECORATE FOR VBS!
WELL, THIS'LL HELP ME NOW.
WE'LL, UHH...LET YOU KNOW IF WE NEED ANY HELP, FATHER ALVIN!

IT WAS CERTAINLY A NICE SURPRISE TO SEE THEM AT SERVICE TODAY.
WHAT HAS IT BEEN? FIVE YEARS, ABOUT?
SINCE THEIR FATHER MOVED OUT, YES.
I WONDER WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT THIS CHANGE.
I AM NOT SURE. THEY HAVE BEEN ACTING... RATHER DIFFERENT ALL WEEK.
WELL, NOT ALL CHANGES ARE BAD.
OFFICE

UUUGH, WHERE IS IT?! NEED TO GET OUT OF THIS STUPID DRESS!
YOU GUYS SAID THE ATTIC, RIGHT? THAT SHOULD BE JUST AHEAD...
K-THUNK!!

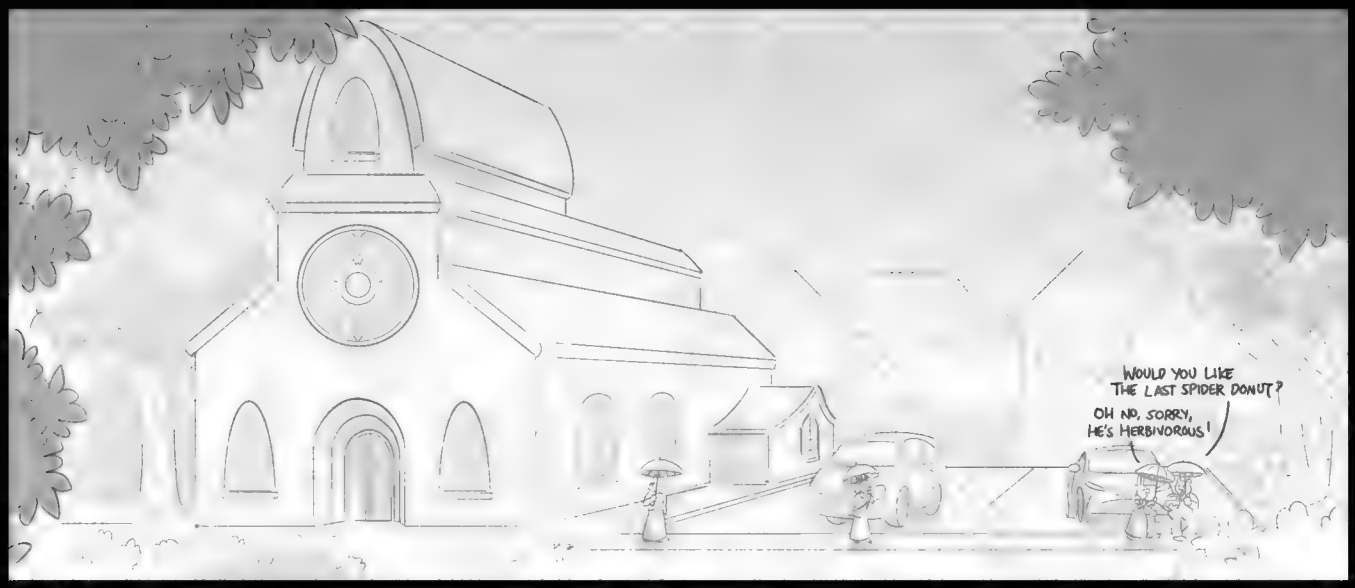

WOAH, THAT WAS EASY!
LET'S GO!

POP!
POP!
POP!
UUGH, FINALLY OUT OF—
...THAT DRESS...

WOW, UM... DON'T THINK I WAS EXPECTING THIS...
POP!
POP!
SUSIE! THERE YOU ARE! THERE WAS LIKE...A BIG TORNADO ALL OF A SUDDEN, AND—
YEAH, I KNOW! YOU FREAKED ME OUT THERE!
I DID?
WELL, I WASN'T SCARED!

THE LAST WORLD WE NEED TO TRAVEL TO!
...I MUST ADMIT, IT'S NOT VERY INVITING-LOOKING.
YEAH...A-A BIT SPOOKY.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT FORWARD.
YEAH, YEAH.

THIS DARK WORLD SEEMS SO LONELY...I HOPE WE FIND SOMEONE SOON.
PROBABLY ANOTHER ASRIEL LOOKALIKE WILL BE SHOWING UP SOON ENOUGH.
YOU REALLY THINK SO?
WE'VE MET ONE EVERY TIME WE GO TO A NEW PART OF THE DARK WORLD...
...WHY SHOULD THIS ONE BE ANY DIFFERENT?


WOULD YOU LIKE THE LAST SPIDER DONUT?
OH NO, SORRY, HE'S HERBIVOROUS!

IT FEELS STRANGE NOT GETTING LUNCH WITH THEM...

MAYOR HOLIDAY! I DO NOT SUPPOSE YOU HAVE ANY NEWS FROM THE POLICE ON—
BEEP
NO, MISS TORIEL. THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN ASKING FOR A POLICE FORCE FROM THE CITY TO ASSIST OFFICER UNDYNE.

SHE'S QUITE EAGER TO INVESTIGATE, BUT SHE AND OFFICER BLOOK ARE STILL ONLY TWO PEOPLE.

...OH DEAR. THEN THIS IS QUITE SERIOUS.

WHILE I'M QUITE UNHAPPY ABOUT HAVING TO ASK FOR OUTSIDE HELP, I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT LIKE OLD TIMES ANYMORE.
CAN'T EASILY... TAKE CARE OF THINGS OURSELVES LIKE WE USED TO.
NO. I SUPPOSE WE CANNOT.
TORIEL! MAYOR HOLIDAY! I-I UM... THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I NEED TO...TELL YOU...
IS IT ABOUT THE BACK PAYMENTS OF RENT YOU OWE? AS HAS BEEN EXPLAINED TIME AND AGAIN, YOUR BUILDING IS ZONED FOR COMMERCIAL BUSINESS.
WHICH MEANS YOU NEED TO TREAT IT LIKE A BUSINESS, NOT A HOME YOU DON'T EVEN OWN.

NO, UM...IT'S NOT THAT... IT'S SOMETHING ELSE IMPORTANT...
WELL, THEN? EXPLAIN YOURSELF, ASGORE.
WELL, GOLLY, IT'S REALLY HARD TO EXPLAIN...JUST, UM...
SOMETHING HAPPENED, I'M NOT SURE WHAT...AND I'VE GOT THIS VERY BAD FEELING THAT IT'S... WELL...
WELL? THAT IT IS WHAT?
IT'S JUST...I'M REALLY TROUBLED AT THE THOUGHT OF EVEN BRINGING IT UP...
SO I'M TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS, AND—
M-MAYBE IF WE GO BACK TO MY PLACE, I—
ASGORE, THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR PROBLEM!
EXPECTING FLOWERS TO FIX ALL ILLS AND YET STILL BEING UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE OUTSIDE OF THEM!

...HERE. UNTIL YOU BUY ONE OF YOUR OWN.
TORIEL, WAIT, I—
WE CAN SPEAK AGAIN ONCE YOU HAVE ACTUALLY COMMITTED TO WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.
I DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO WAIT FOR A DECISION FROM YOU, YET AGAIN.
CAROL, PLEASE, I'M WORRIED—

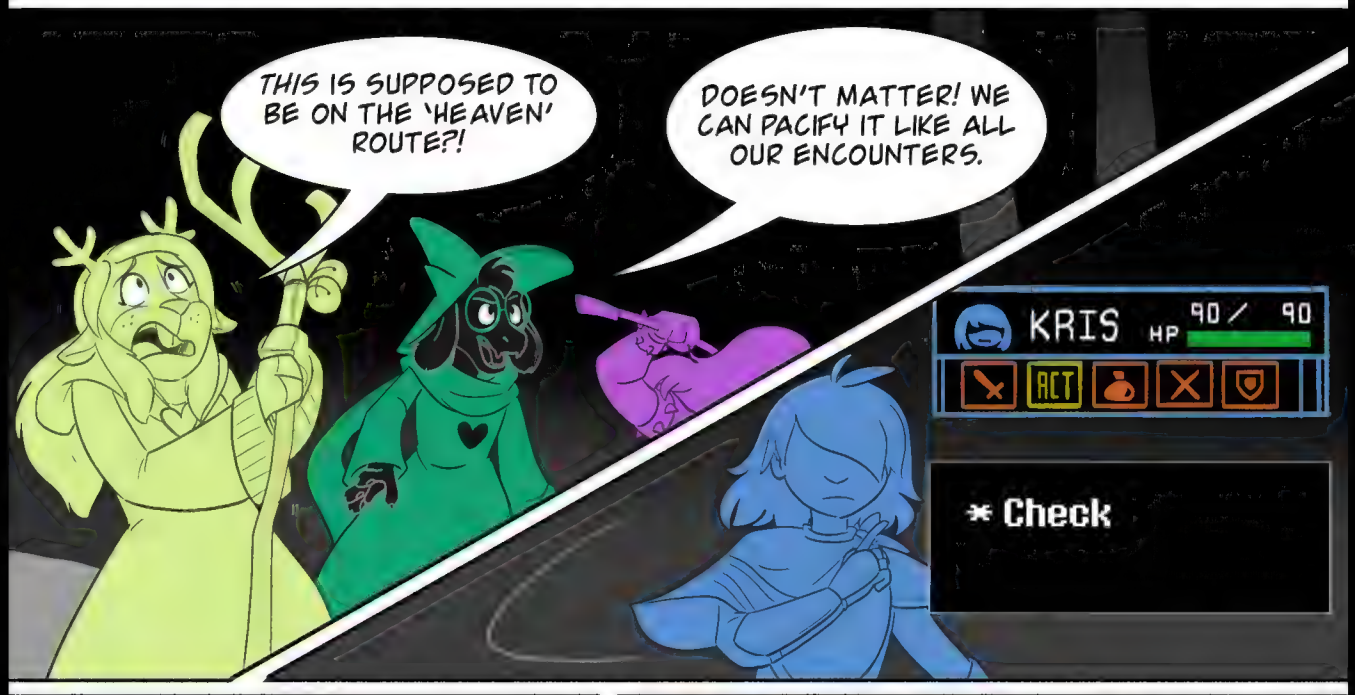
MAYOR HOLIDAY, THANK YOU, MR. DREEMURR.
AND IF THIS IS ABOUT WEIRD THINGS HAPPENING, LIKE A MISSING WHEELBARROW, OR LIGHTS NOT WORKING, OR ODD SHADOWS ON YOUR WALLS, THEN BELIEVE ME, I ALREADY KNOW.
I MUST FOCUS ON FIXING THAT NOW.
YOU MUST FOCUS ON GETTING THAT RENT TOGETHER.
IT'S JUST...
IT'S ABOUT WHAT WE DID, ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

WHEN ARE WE GONNA MEET SOME ENEMIES WE CAN THRASH? JUST WALKING IS BORING!
MAYBE NOT ENEMIES, BUT IT SURE WOULD BE NICE TO SEE ANY INHABITANTS...
WAIT...IS THAT...?
GUYS? UM...
HEY HEY HEY ALL YOU CLOWNS!

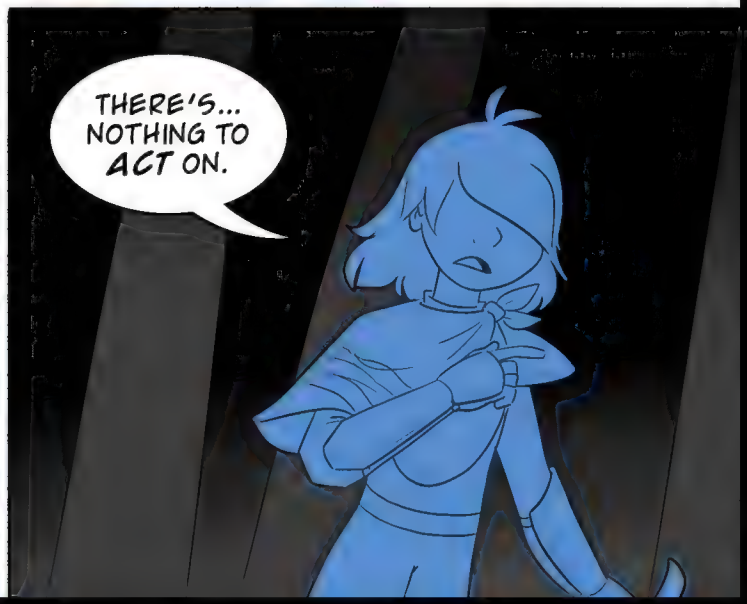
LOOKIT THIS!
HEAVEN
HELL
SO, WHICH WAY DO WE GO?
HEAVEN
HELL
HEAVEN, DUH.
HEAVEN.
HEAVEN.
YES, HEAVEN SOUNDS BEST.

I HOPE THAT WASN'T SOME SORT OF PUZZLE.
JUST LOOKED LIKE A SIGNPOST TO ME.
YES! JUST... COMPARED TO PREVIOUS JOURNEYS, THIS IS REMARKABLY EASY THUSFAR...
SNAP
RRF
CRNACH
SNAP
RFF
RFF
CRRNCH
CRRK
RRRRR
SNAP
WHAM!

* Rat King appeared!


THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE 'HEAVEN' ROUTE?!
DOESN'T MATTER! WE CAN PACIFY IT LIKE ALL OUR ENCOUNTERS.
KRIS HP 90 / 90
ACT
* Check

* ATK 12 DEF 60
* Rat King: mad king of the rats

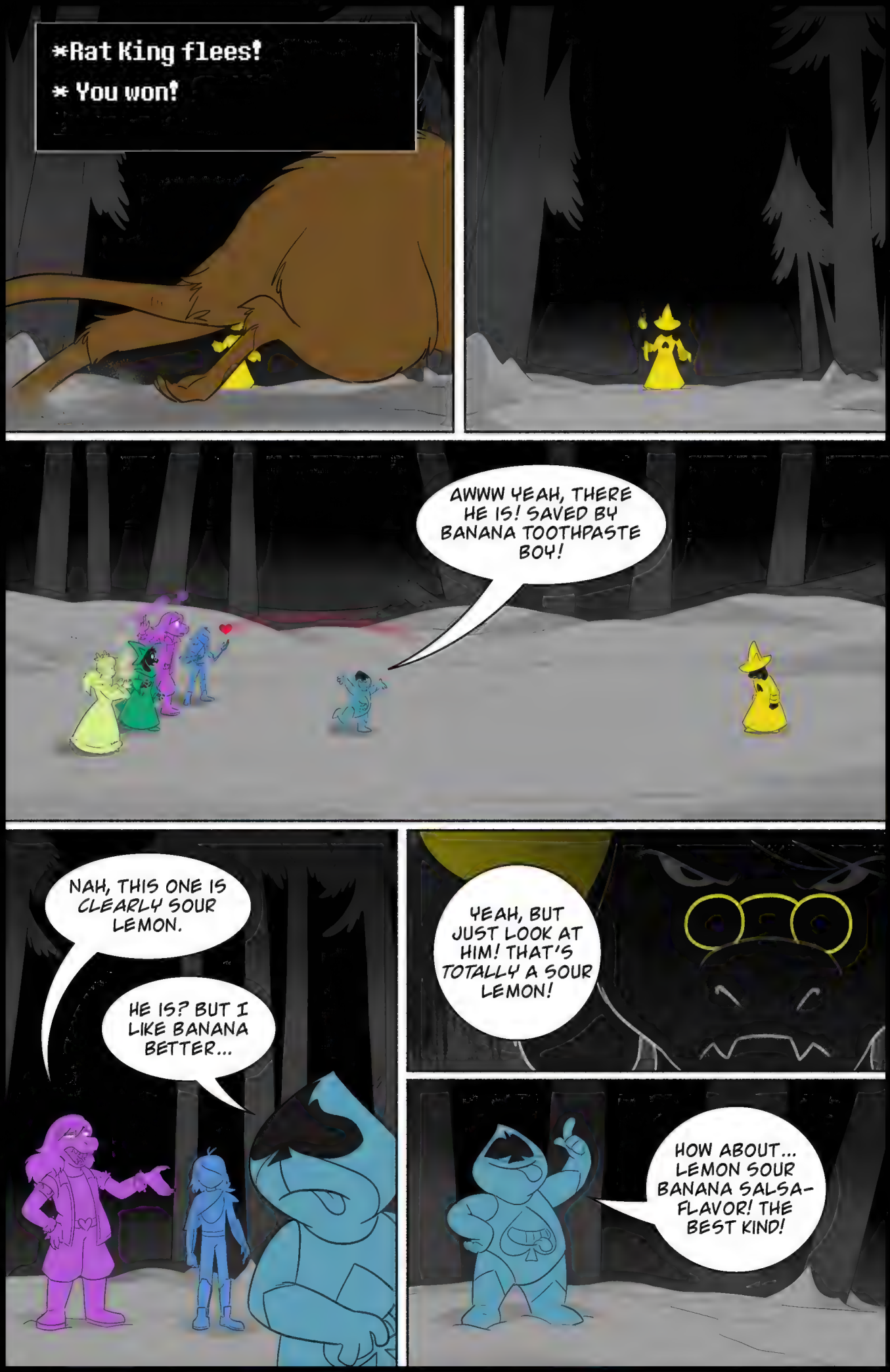

THERE'S... NOTHING TO ACT ON.

REEEAAK!!
* Check
WAIT...YOU'RE SURE? NO ACTS AT ALL?
I'M SURE. THERE'S NOTHING.
BUT THAT MAKES NO SENSE!

UNLESS...
WAIT! THIS CREATURE ISN'T A DARKNER!
THEN...WHAT IS IT?
IT MUST'VE COME FROM YOUR WORLD, BUT... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ONLY LIGHTNERS CAN COME HERE!
ARE YOU SAYING IT'S...
IT'S JUST A RAT.
RREEEEEAAAA

SNAP!
UUGH!
THAT EXPLAINS A LOT.
45
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! HOW COULD THIS THING HAVE EVEN GOTTEN INTO THE DARK WORLD?
39
21
13

RRR
CLANG.
L-LEAVE US ALONE ALREADY!
KRR
AAAAAA
SNAP!
FWOOOOM
84
76
73
68
92
81
99
411


*Rat King flees!
* You won!
AWWW YEAH, THERE HE IS! SAVED BY BANANA TOOTHPASTE BOY!
NAH, THIS ONE IS CLEARLY SOUR LEMON.
HE IS? BUT I LIKE BANANA BETTER...
YEAH, BUT JUST LOOK AT HIM! THAT'S TOTALLY A SOUR LEMON!
HOW ABOUT... LEMON SOUR BANANA SALSA-FLAVOR! THE BEST KIND!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP, FRIEND! I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW HOW THAT CREATURE GOT HERE?
LEAVE.
...WHAT?
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, EITHER. GET OUT OF MY FOREST.
YOUR KIND ISN'T WELCOME.
IT IS REALLY WEIRD HEARING SOMETHING LIKE THAT COMING OUT OF AZZY'S MOUTH.
LOOK, WHATEVER LEGEND OR PROPHECY YOU MAY HAVE KNOWN ABOUT HUMAN LIGHTNERS, I PROMISE YOU—

NOT THE HUMAN!
THE MONSTERS!
W-WHAT?
HUH?
LIARS! COWARDS! HYPOCRITES!!
NONE OF YOU DESERVE TO SET FOOT ON THIS PATH!
THE HELL IS THIS GUY'S PROBLEM?!
YOU'RE RIGHT, SOUR LEMON IS BEST.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN... BUT ALL OF OUR PARTY HAVE THE HEARTS OF HEROES!
AND WE MUST GET THROUGH HERE TO RESCUE OUR FRIENDS!

NOT THE MONSTERS! YOU MUST TURN BACK.
THEY HAVE TO COME WITH US.
IF YOU WON'T RESPECT MY DOMAIN...
FWOOM
...THEN I'M AFRAID YOUR JOURNEY STOPS HERE!
* DARK PRINCE LAIRSE blocks the way!

WE'LL END THIS PEACEFULLY, AND THEN YOU NEED TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S WRONG!
YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT IS WRONG.
Exchange
Threaten
Reason
WE NEED TENSION POINTS.
THIS IS STOPPING HERE AND NOW.
WH AM!

Controls Disabled
FWUMP
KRIS?! KRIS, WAKE UP!!
WE CAN'T DODGE ATTACKS WITHOUT YOU!
zzzzzzz
zzzzzzzzz
87
WHACK!
zzzzzz
THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING, MONSTERS...

LEAVE THIS FOREST, AND NEVER RETURN!
34
46
29
52
77
66
61
HEAVEN, DUH.
HEAVEN
HELL
YEAH, HEAVEN IS BEST.

LEAVE.
* DARK PRINCE LAIRSE blocks the way!
I WILL ONLY SAY THIS ONCE...
GO BACK THE WAY YOU CAME!
YEAH, HEAVEN IS BEST.

THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING!
WE CAN'T LEAVE THE MONSTERS BEHIND!
I WON'T ALLOW THEM TO PASS THIS WAY.
WE COULD GO THE OTHER ROUTE.
YOU CANNOT.
FWUUMP
THAT WILL ONLY LEAD YOU TO PAIN YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO BEAR.

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE...
GO BACK THE WAY YOU CAME AND DON'T RETURN!
THERE IS A LEGEND, WHISPERED IN SHADOWS...
AND HUMAN, IF YOU PURSUE IT, IT'LL BE YOUR DOWNFALL!
AS LONG AS I AM HERE...
...YOU WILL NOT PASS THIS WAY!

EAVEN, DUH.
HEAVEN.
AH, HEAVEN IS BEST.
CRACK
HEAVEN
HELL
KRIS?!
WHAT THE—?!
KRIS, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?!
KRIS... WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
A DIFFERENT CHOICE.

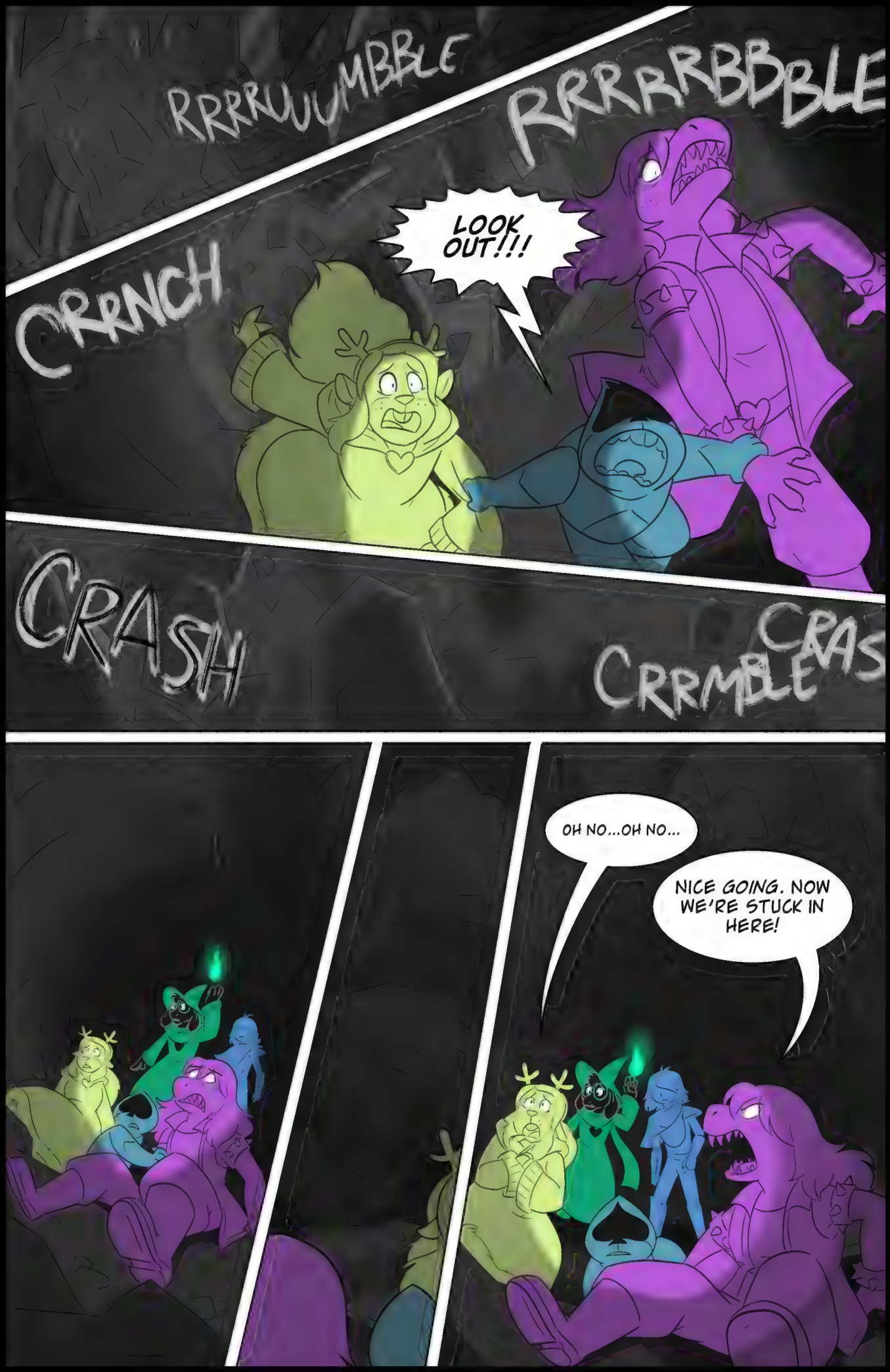
KRIS, SERIOUSLY, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
GOING THIS WAY.
STOP BEING STUPID! WE ALL WANTED TO GO THE OTHER WAY!
AND I'M THE LEADER.
YEAH, BUT...
YOU'RE NOT... ACTING RIGHT...

I...I DIDN'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING, BUT...
NO, SOMETHING'S OFF.
I JUST CAN'T TELL WHAT...
KRIS...

ARE...YOU SURE YOU WANT TO KEEP GOING?
YES.
I REALLY, REALLY DON'T LIKE THIS...
I KINDA THOUGHT THE HELL ROAD WOULD BE HOTTER...

KRIS, PLEASE...IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY BOTHERING YOU...
YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ASRIEL.
KRIS, I...I KNOW, BUT...
WHAT ARE YOU HIDING FROM ME?
I'M NOT...I MEAN, I JUST—
CAN'T SAY.
BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW, OR DON'T WANT TO SAY?

BECAUSE I...DON'T KNOW IF IT'LL DO GOOD. KRIS...I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY. TO FEEL LIKE YOU CAN BE A HERO. LIKE YOU CAN HAVE REAL FRIENDS!
I WON'T SAY ANYTHING THAT'LL MAKE YOU DOUBT THAT.
AND YOU THINK THE TRUTH WOULD MAKE ME DOUBT THAT?
NO, I JUST—
YOU'RE JUST MADE FROM HIM, TOO! JUST MADE TO HIDE THINGS FROM ME!
RRRMMM
HEY! STOP YELLING AT RALSEI!
I'M NOT YELLING!!


RRRRUUMBBLE
RRRRRRBBBLE
LOOK OUT!!!
CRRNCH
CRASH
CRRMBLE
CRAS
OH NO...OH NO...
NICE GOING. NOW WE'RE STUCK IN HERE!

GUESS WE ALL HAVE NO CHOICE NOW.
I'M SO SORRY...I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET THEM...
W-WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
GUESS WE KEEP GOING.
BUT I AM GONNA FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THEM.

FWUMP

YOU WANNA EXPLAIN THAT LITTLE OUTBURST BACK THERE, KRIS?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
YEAH IT DOES! WE'RE STUCK IN THIS ICE TUNNEL BECAUSE OF IT!
SORRY.
AND NOT JUST THAT! I...
...I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS IT GETTING COLDER?
AND BRIGHTER. WEIRD!

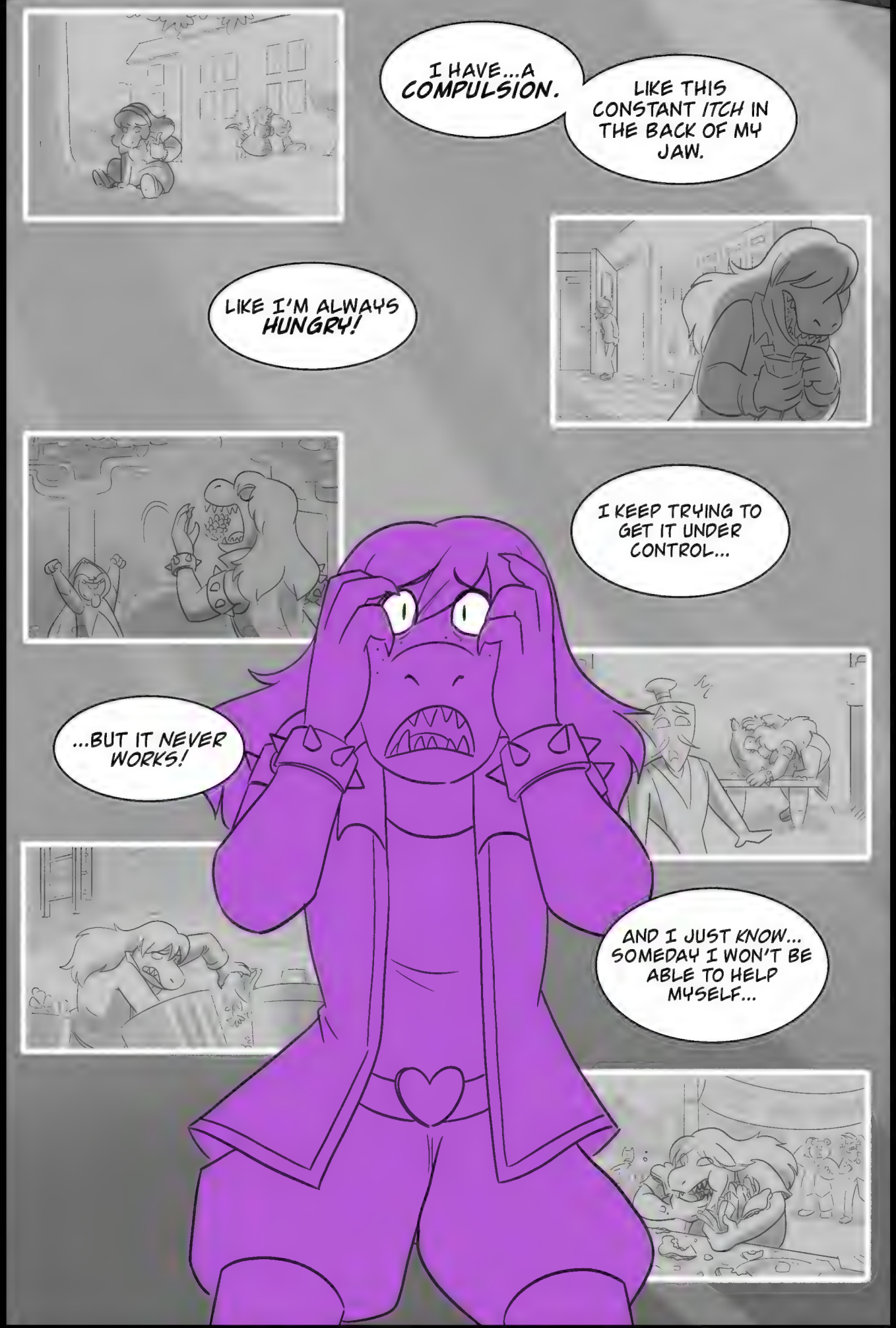
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
LOOKS PRETTY DEAD END-Y.
WAIT! MAYBE NOT!
hot seat
confess your sins to open the path
AWW NO! THIS WAS THE WORST PART OF CHURCH CAMP!

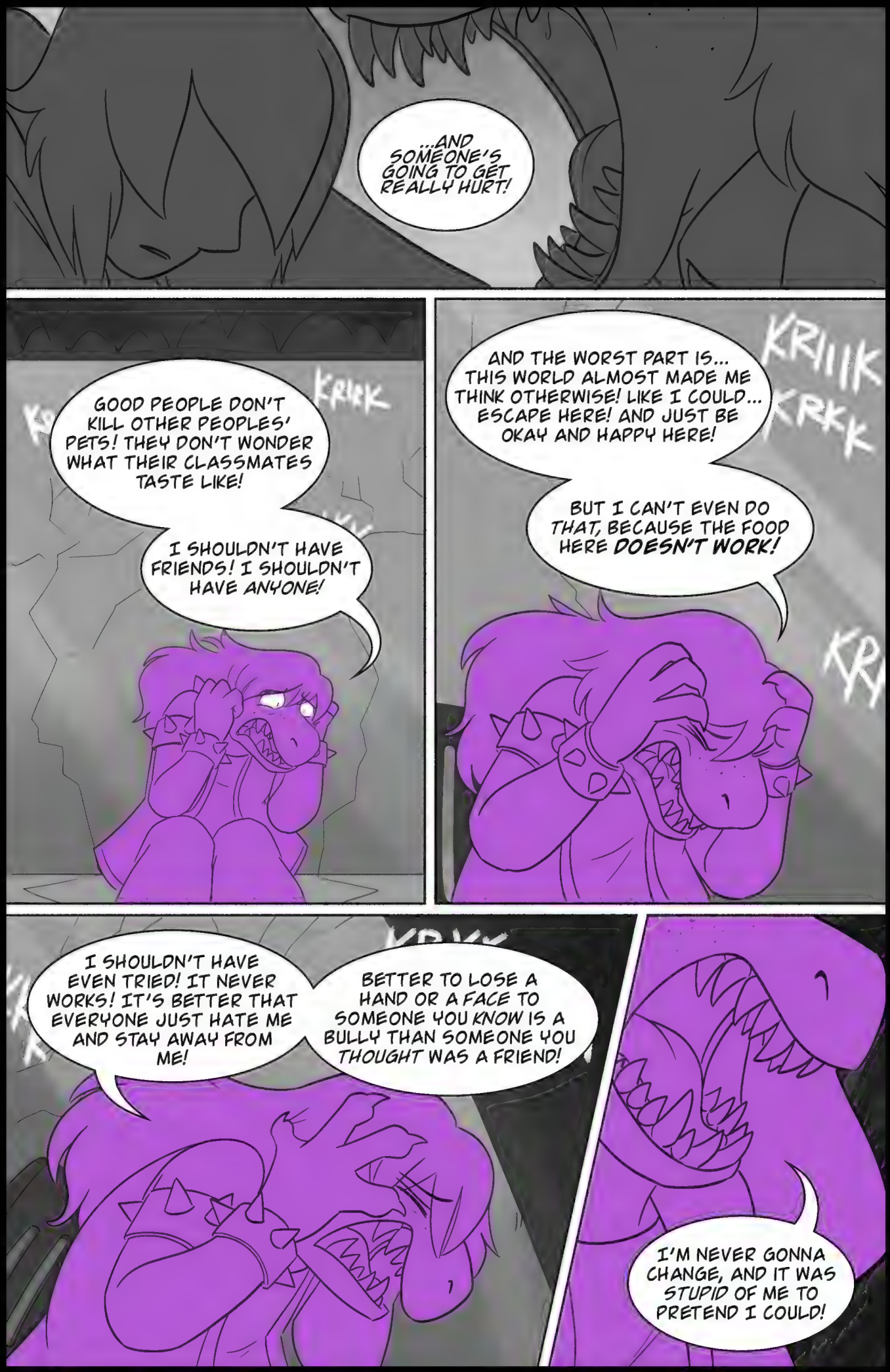
SOOO, THIS PUZZLE IS BASICALLY "SAY BAD STUFF YOU'VE DONE" TO BEAT IT?
DAMN, OKAY, THEN I'LL GET US OUTTA HERE!
AT LEAST I CAN ACTUALLY DO THIS PUZZLE...
OKAY, BAD THINGS... NEVER GO TO CHURCH... SWEAR AT LEAST ONCE A DAY...OKAY, AT LEAST THREE...
NEVER DO MY HOMEWORK...
AND...A-AND...
WHEN I WAS SIX YEARS OLD, I—

MMF
N-NO! I DON'T WANNA DO THIS ANYMORE.
SUSIE, WHAT—
IT WAS...M-MAKING ME SAY SOMETHING!—
DON'T WORRY, SUSIE, I CAN DO IT!
I'M LOUD AND OBNOXIOUS! AND ONE TIME I MADE FUN OF A RUDINN THAT HAD TOILET PAPER STUCK TO HIS TAIL! I DON'T DRINK ALL MY DINNER MILK...
...ONCE I KICKED A RABBICK, AND...I TALK ABOUT TOOTHPASTE ALL THE TIME, BUT I HAVE NEVER BRUSHED MY TEETH!

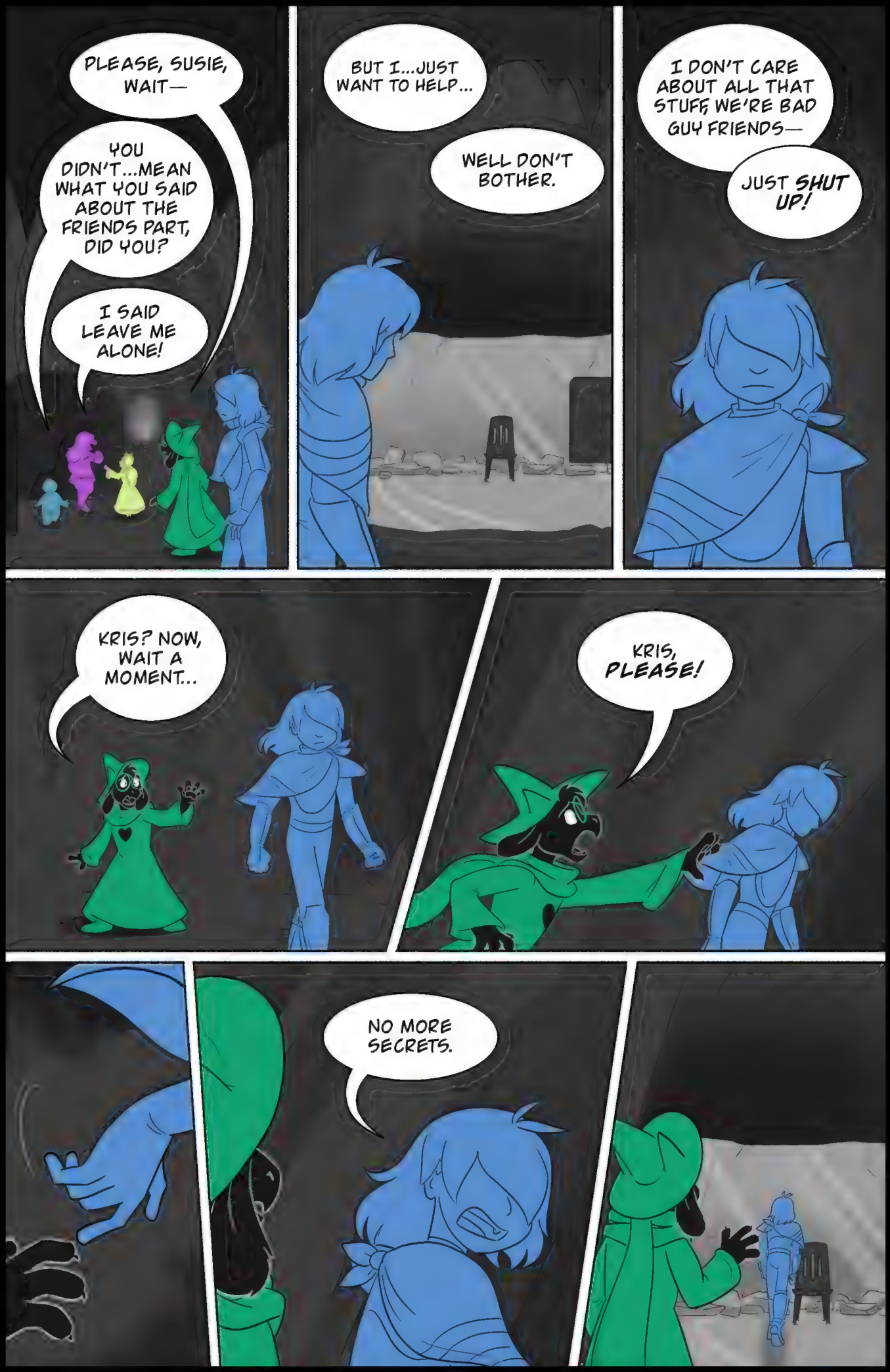
NOTHING'S HAPPENING...
I...I THINK THIS PUZZLE MAY ONLY WORK ON LIGHTNERS...
I...M-MAYBE I CAN...
NO, IT'S FINE.
IT'S FINE, ACTUALLY.
I'LL DO IT.
WHEN I WAS SIX YEARS OLD, I WAS SITTING IN CLASS, AND...

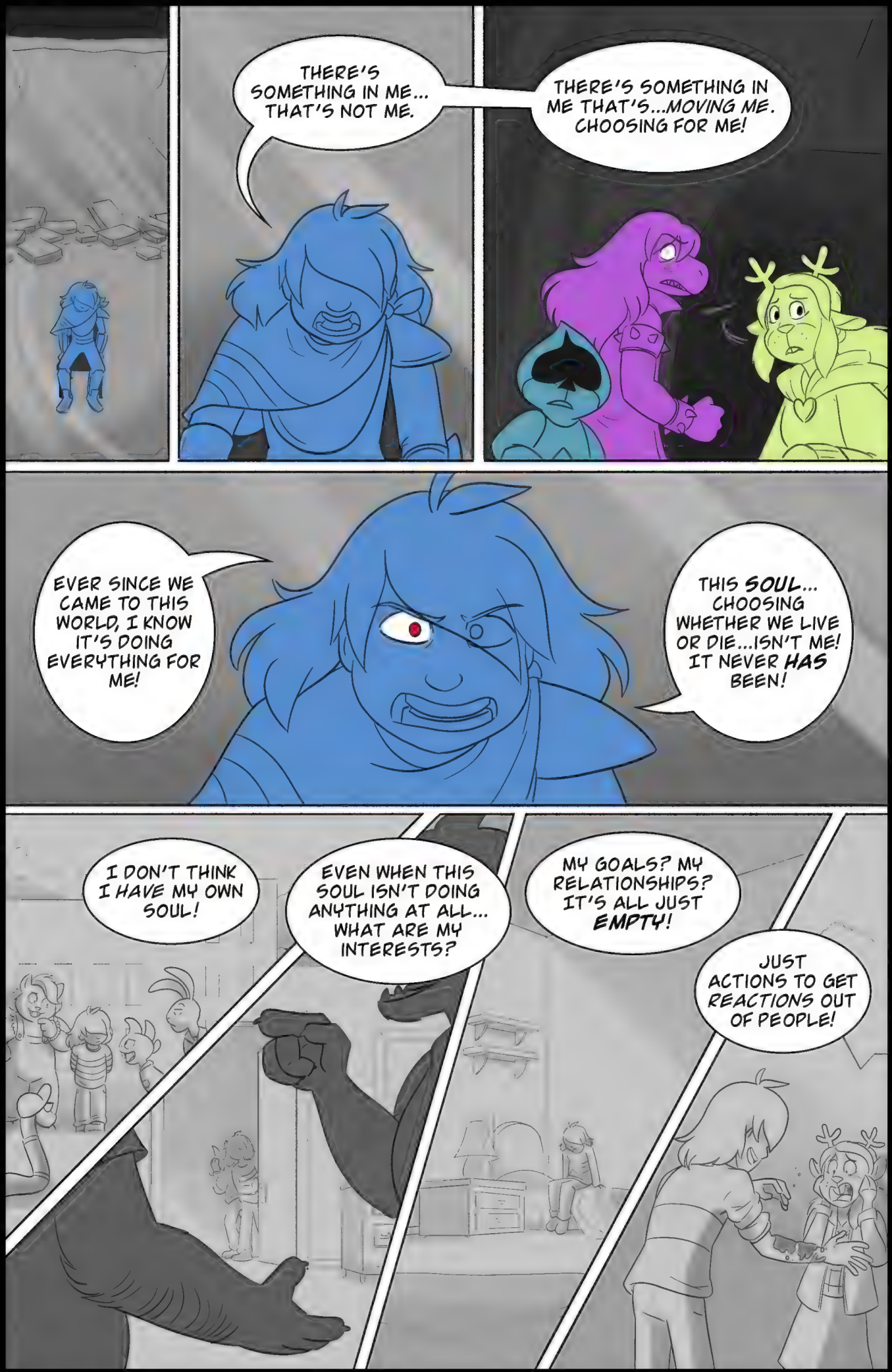
I WAS SO HUNGRY...I THOUGHT I'D DIE.
I COULDN'T THINK STRAIGHT.
AND THE KINDERGARTEN CLASS HAD THIS PET HAMSTER.
WE WERE ALL SUPPOSED TO HELP TAKE CARE OF IT.
DURING RECESS THAT DAY, I SNUCK BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM...
...AND I ATE IT.
CRNCH
CRNCH CHEW


I HAVE...A COMPULSION.
LIKE THIS CONSTANT ITCH IN THE BACK OF MY JAW.
LIKE I'M ALWAYS HUNGRY!
I KEEP TRYING TO GET IT UNDER CONTROL...
...BUT IT NEVER WORKS!
AND I JUST KNOW... SOMEDAY I WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP MYSELF...


...AND SOMEONE'S GOING TO GET REALLY HURT!
GOOD PEOPLE DON'T KILL OTHER PEOPLES' PETS! THEY DON'T WONDER WHAT THEIR CLASSMATES TASTE LIKE!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE FRIENDS! I SHOULDN'T HAVE ANYONE!
KRIIIK
KRKK
AND THE WORST PART IS... THIS WORLD ALMOST MADE ME THINK OTHERWISE! LIKE I COULD... ESCAPE HERE! AND JUST BE OKAY AND HAPPY HERE!
BUT I CAN'T EVEN DO THAT, BECAUSE THE FOOD HERE DOESN'T WORK!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE EVEN TRIED! IT NEVER WORKS! IT'S BETTER THAT EVERYONE JUST HATE ME AND STAY AWAY FROM ME!
BETTER TO LOSE A HAND OR A FACE TO SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS A BULLY THAN SOMEONE YOU THOUGHT WAS A FRIEND!
I'M NEVER GONNA CHANGE, AND IT WAS STUPID OF ME TO PRETEND I COULD!

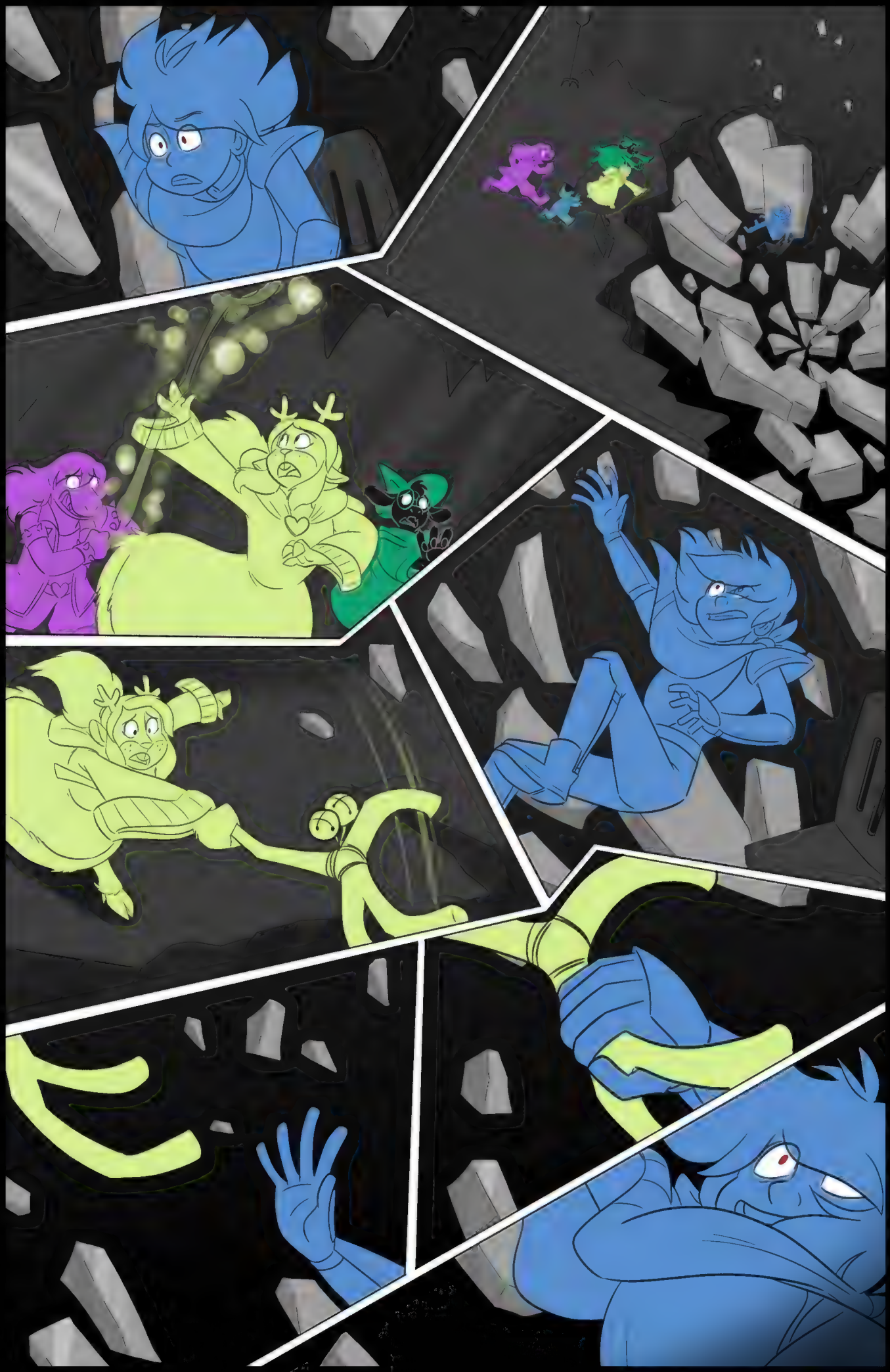
KKR
KRRK
KRR
KRRK
KRRK
KRRK


PLEASE, SUSIE, WAIT—
YOU DIDN'T...MEAN WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE FRIENDS PART, DID YOU?
I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE!
BUT I...JUST WANT TO HELP...
WELL DON'T BOTHER.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT ALL THAT STUFF, WE'RE BAD GUY FRIENDS—
JUST SHUT UP!
KRIS? NOW, WAIT A MOMENT...
KRIS, PLEASE!
NO MORE SECRETS.

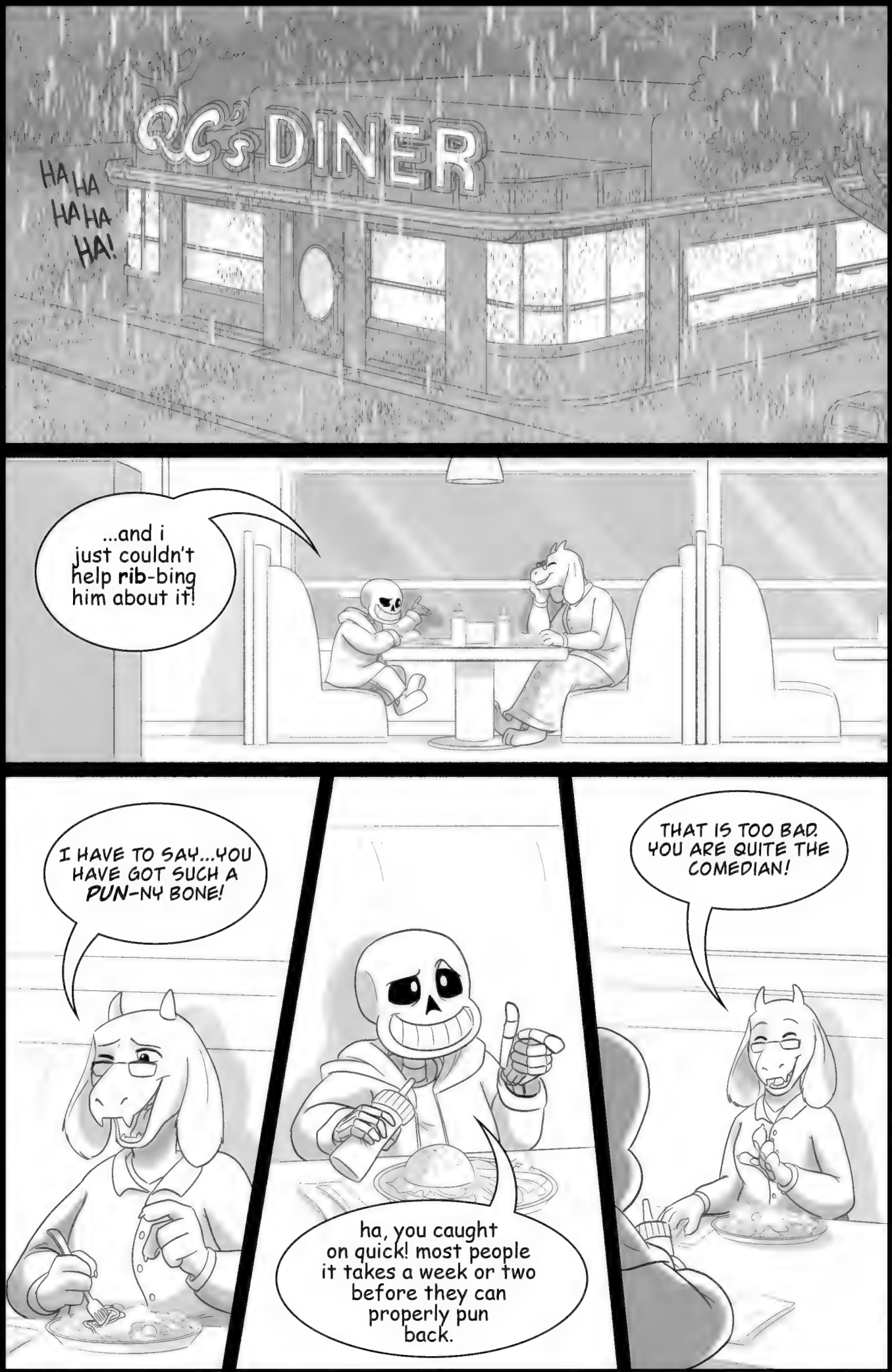

THERE'S SOMETHING IN ME... THAT'S NOT ME.
THERE'S SOMETHING IN ME THAT'S...MOVING ME. CHOOSING FOR ME!
EVER SINCE WE CAME TO THIS WORLD, I KNOW IT'S DOING EVERYTHING FOR ME!
THIS SOUL... CHOOSING WHETHER WE LIVE OR DIE...ISN'T ME! IT NEVER HAS BEEN!
I DON'T THINK I HAVE MY OWN SOUL!
EVEN WHEN THIS SOUL ISN'T DOING ANYTHING AT ALL... WHAT ARE MY INTERESTS?
MY GOALS? MY RELATIONSHIPS? IT'S ALL JUST EMPTY!
JUST ACTIONS TO GET REACTIONS OUT OF PEOPLE!

HAVE I EVER DONE ANYTHING GOOD, FOR ITS OWN SAKE? HAVE I EVER MADE THE RIGHT DECISION?
DID I REALLY BRING US TO THIS CAVE? DID I CHOOSE TO SIT IN THIS CHAIR?!
I DON'T KNOW!
THE ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT I'M SICK OF IT!
I'VE BEEN TRYING, FOR SO LONG, TO GET RID OF IT...
...BUT IT NEVER WORKS! IT KEEPS GETTING BACK TO ME!
BUT ALL OF THAT...IS NOT THE REAL SIN.

YOU ALL WANT A HERO, A FRIEND... AND I'M AFRAID I CAN NEVER BE THAT!
AFRAID THAT I'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET RID OF THIS THING CONTROLLING MY LIFE! EVEN THE WORST THINGS IMAGINABLE!
EVEN IF IT MEANS GETTING RID OF EVERYTHING IT WANTS TO PLAY WITH! EVEN MY FRIENDS, MY FAMILY!
EVEN IF IT MEANS BURNING MY HOME TO THE GROUND, SO THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT TO PLAY!
BOOOOM



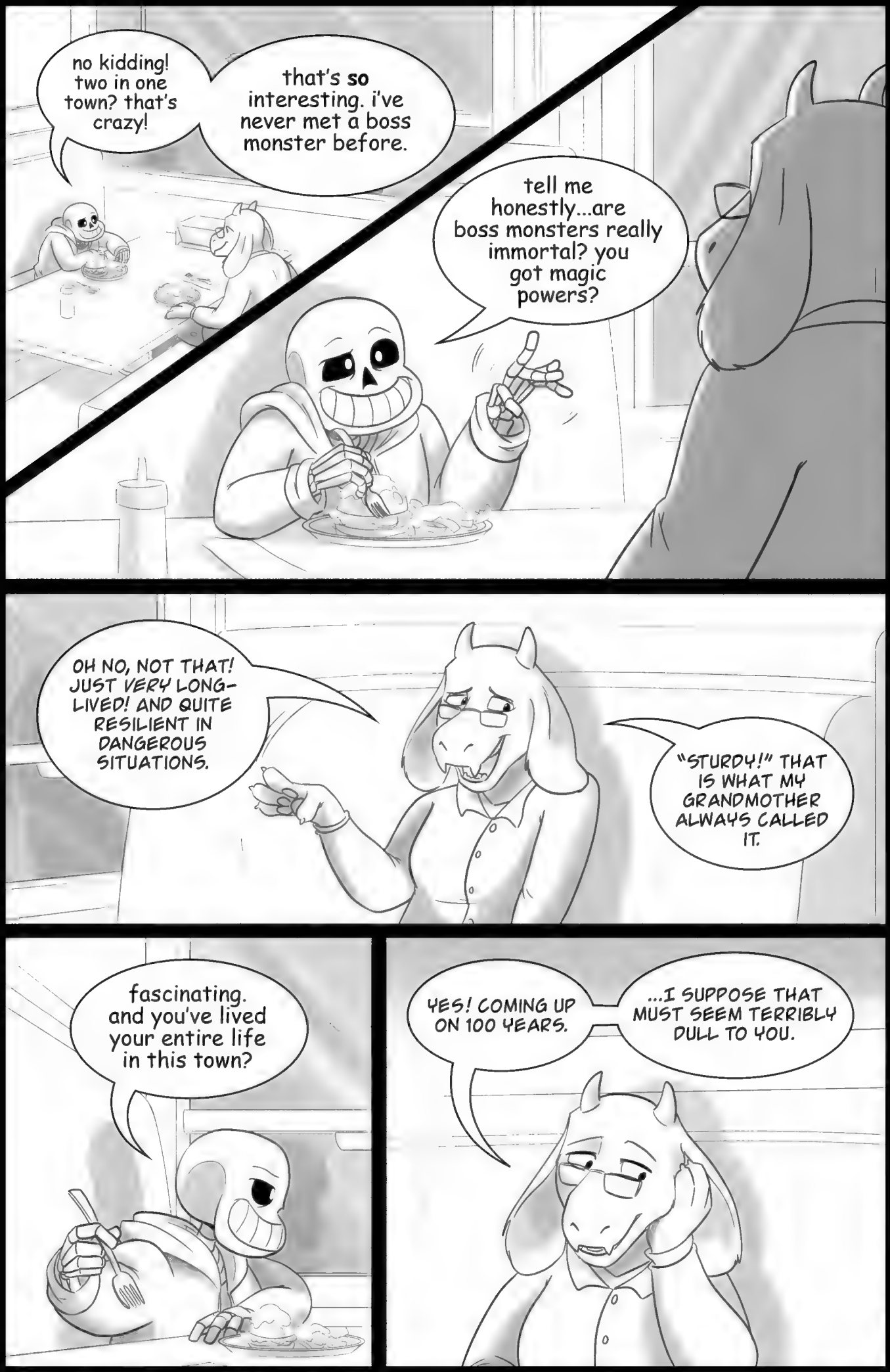
AAAAAAHHHH
KRIS!
NOELLE!


Q's DINER
HA HA HA HA HA!
...and i just couldn't help rib-bing him about it!
I HAVE TO SAY...YOU HAVE GOT SUCH A PUN-NY BONE!
ha, you caught on quick! most people it takes a week or two before they can properly pun back.
THAT IS TOO BAD. YOU ARE QUITE THE COMEDIAN!

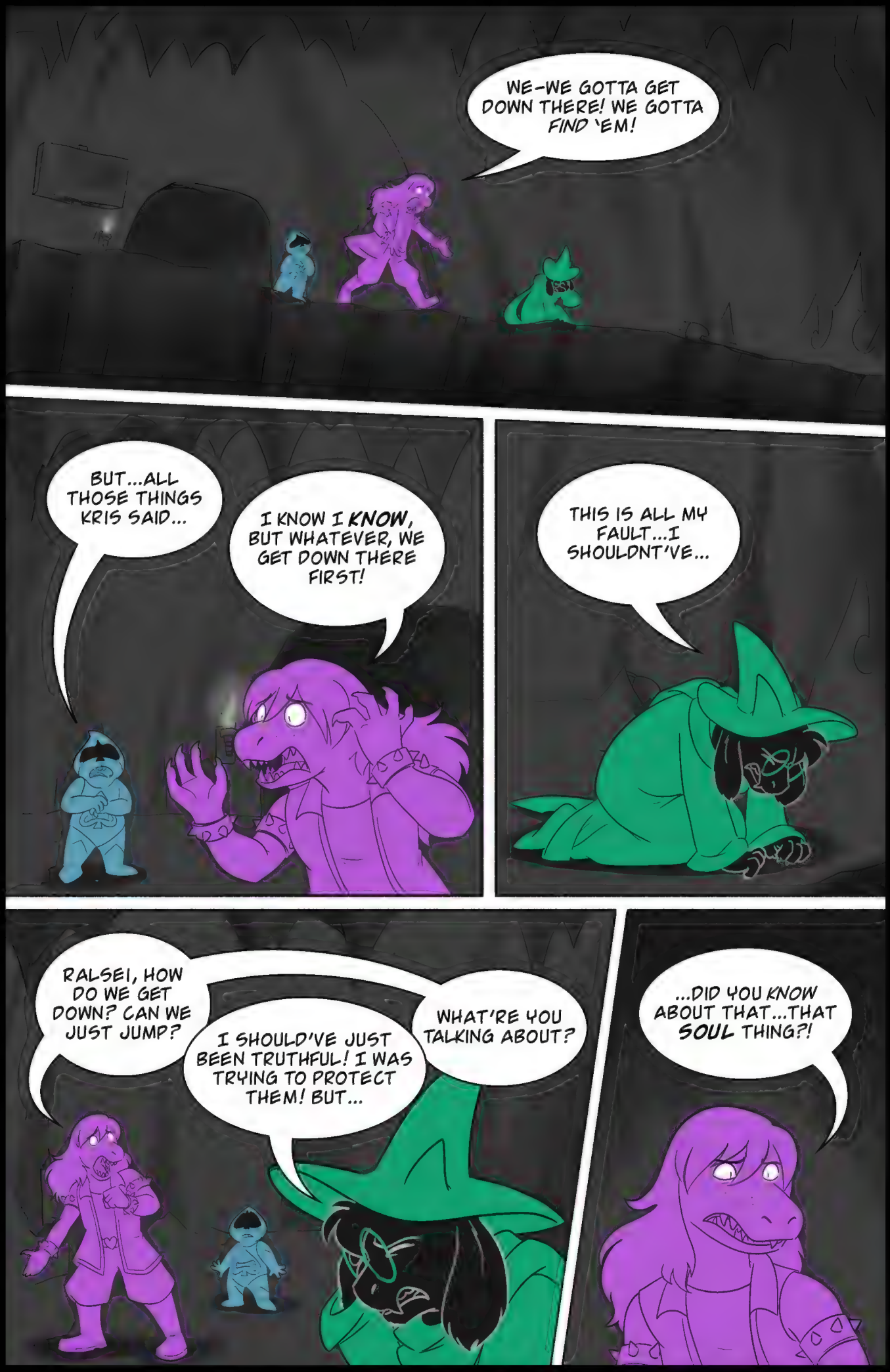
heh, paps would probably argue otherwise.
but you gotta have one good critic in your life. keeps you on your toes.
OH, I DID WANT TO ASK. IS YOUR BROTHER ALL RIGHT? YOU MENTIONED SOME EMERGENCY...
yeah, yeah, he's fine. papyrus is a real good guy, but he's had some bad experiences.
plus, he never quite got over some childhood fears... clowns, the dark, humans in the closet, stuff like that.
somethin' set him off the other night, and i couldn't just leave him. nothin' some good food and bedtime stories couldn't fix.
WELL, THAT IS VERY SWEET OF YOU TO BE THERE FOR HIM!
he's my bro, we gotta look out for each other.
but hey, you're probably sick of hearing about me. let's talk about you!

what does a wild girl like you do for fun in this town?
OH, I AM AFRAID MY LIFE IS TERRIBLY UNINTERESTING THESE DAYS!
IT IS HONESTLY REFRESHING TO HEAR YOUR STORIES.
hey, you don't gotta keep up that demure schtick with me. i can see that rebellious streak in your eyes!
must have some stories from when you were younger?
HEEHEE!
WELL...BACK AROUND 1975, I THINK...
MY HUS—EX HUSBAND AND I...
WELL, IT WAS AFTER A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR A FRIEND, AND WE HAD BOTH HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK!

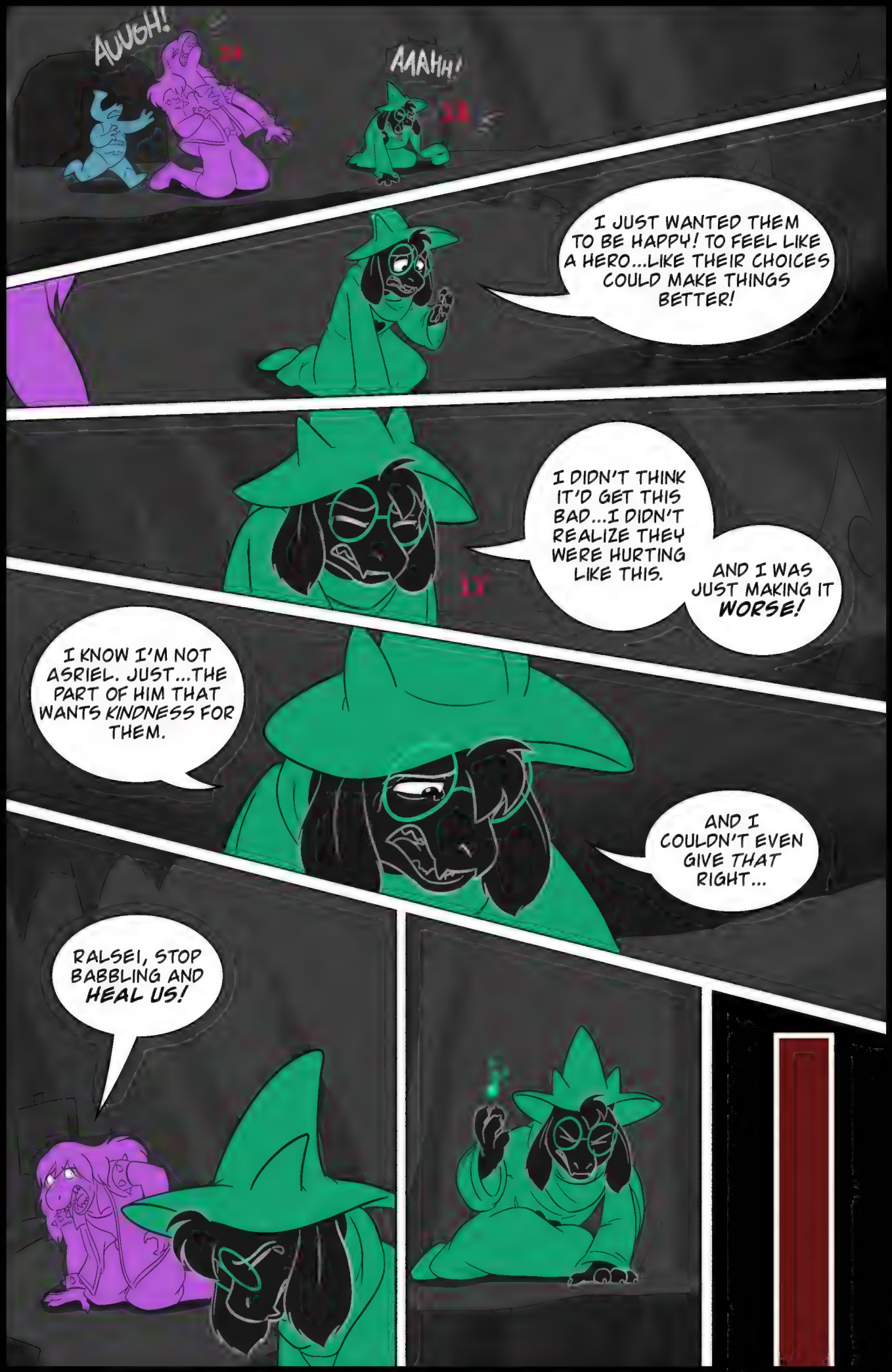
WE ENDED UP SKINNY-DIPPING IN THE RIVER...
AND OLD MAN GERSON HAPPENED TO BE WALKING BY AT THE TIME!
I POPPED RIGHT OUT OF THE WATER BY HIM, AND SCARED HIM HALF TO DEATH!
that's hilarious. and adorable.
and...almost **sixty** years ago?
you don't look a day over forty.
THAT IS VERY FLATTERING OF YOU!
wait. i think i got it...
...you're a **boss monster**, aren't ya?
YOU ARE CORRECT! MY FAMILY AND THE HOLIDAYS, ACTUALLY.


no kidding! two in one town? that's crazy!
that's so interesting. i've never met a boss monster before.
tell me honestly...are boss monsters really immortal? you got magic powers?
OH NO, NOT THAT! JUST VERY LONG-LIVED! AND QUITE RESILIENT IN DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.
"STURDY!" THAT IS WHAT MY GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS CALLED IT.
fascinating. and you've lived your entire life in this town?
YES! COMING UP ON 100 YEARS.
...I SUPPOSE THAT MUST SEEM TERRIBLY DULL TO YOU.

oh, no.
it's great to
hear that.
CHUNK
TINK
'cause
that
means...
that you
can tell
me...
exactly
what
happened in
this town...
sixty-six
and a half
years ago.


WE-WE GOTTA GET DOWN THERE! WE GOTTA *FIND* 'EM!
BUT...ALL THOSE THINGS KRIS SAID...
I KNOW I ***KNOW***, BUT WHATEVER, WE GET DOWN THERE FIRST!
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT...I SHOULDNT'VE...
RALSEI, HOW DO WE GET DOWN? CAN WE JUST JUMP?
I SHOULD'VE JUST BEEN TRUTHFUL! I WAS TRYING TO PROTECT THEM! BUT...
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
...DID YOU *KNOW* ABOUT THAT...THAT ***SOUL*** THING?!

I KNOW ENOUGH...TO RECOGNIZE THAT THEY'RE NOT ALL LIGHTNER.
THERE'S A PIECE OF THE DARKNESS, THE IMAGINATION, THE DREAM IN THEM.
...DID ASRIEL KNOW THIS, TOO?
UUUGH!
AAHH!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
SOMETHING'S HURTING THE SOUL!

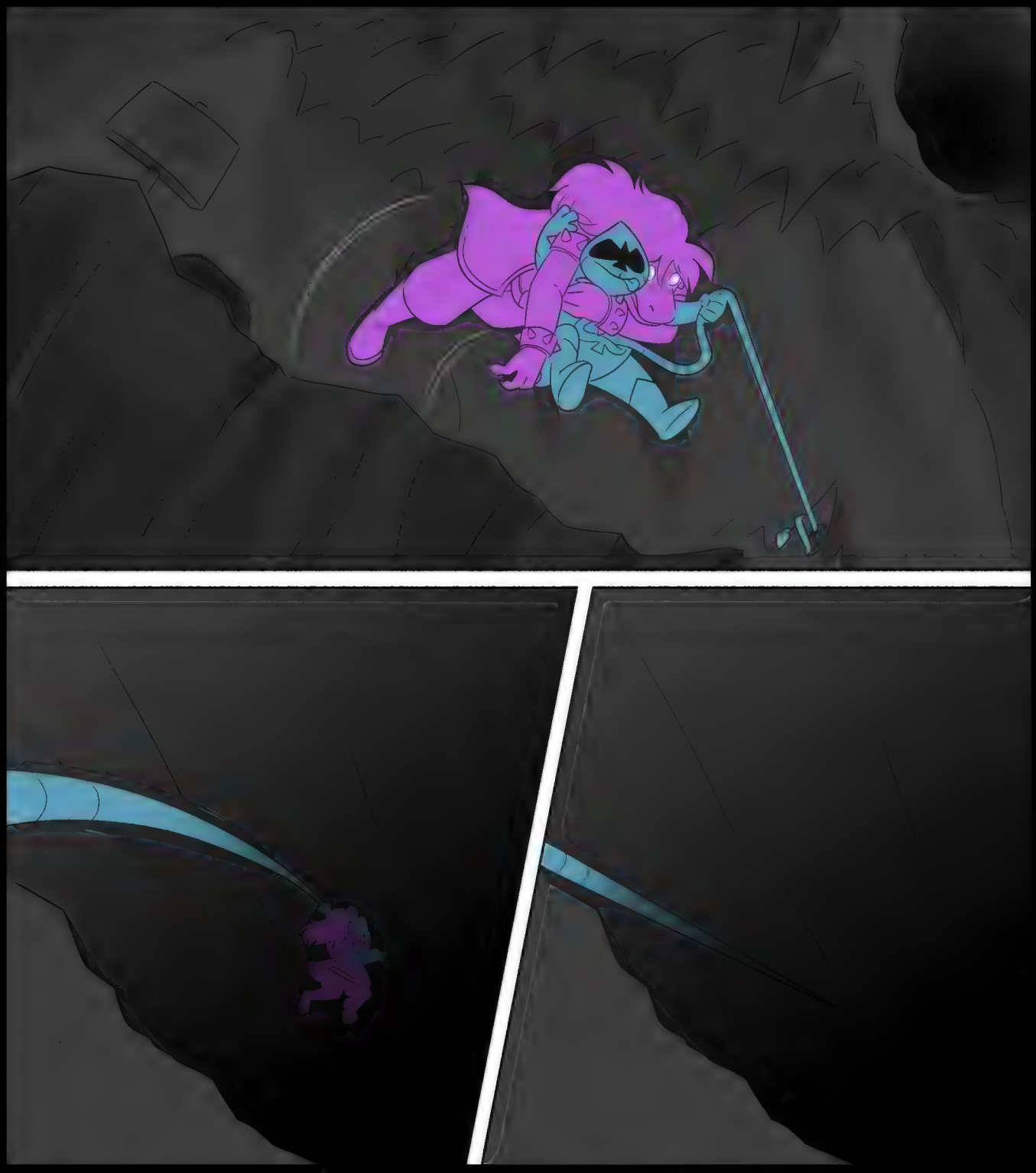

AUUGH!
AAAHH!
I JUST WANTED THEM TO BE HAPPY! TO FEEL LIKE A HERO...LIKE THEIR CHOICES COULD MAKE THINGS BETTER!
I DIDN'T THINK IT'D GET THIS BAD...I DIDN'T REALIZE THEY WERE HURTING LIKE THIS.
AND I WAS JUST MAKING IT *WORSE!*
I KNOW I'M NOT ASRIEL. JUST...THE PART OF HIM THAT WANTS *KINDNESS* FOR THEM.
AND I COULDN'T EVEN GIVE *THAT* RIGHT...
RALSEI, STOP BABBLING AND *HEAL US!*

CAN'T... WITHOUT KRIS...
UUGH! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS HAPPENED!
WHO THE HELL'RE YOU?!
WHAT—

THERE'S STILL ONE MORE THING WE CAN TRY!
I DON'T... UNDERSTAND...
YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR HUMAN FRIEND? TAKE MY HAND!
WOOOOM

HEY!!
WHERE'RE YOU GOING?!
SUSIE!!
UUGH!
33
L-LANCER...I'M SORRY...
YOU DON'T GOTTA BE SORRY FOR ANYTHING!
YOU WERE THE FIRST PERSON... WHO LIKED ME FOR WHO I REALLY WAS. NEVER LOOKED AT ME FUNNY FOR THE GROSS OR HORRIBLE THINGS I DID. MY FIRST REAL FRIEND.
I JUST WANTED US TO HANG OUT, AND...I'M SORRY I WRECKED YOUR HOME AND COULDN'T SET IT RIGHT.
SORRY I HURT YOU.

SUSIE, YOU GOTTA STOP TALKING LIKE THIS IS PAST STUFF! BECAUSE I'M NOT JUST YOUR FRIEND!
I! AM! A LEADER!
AND I'M NOT GONNA GIVE UP ON YOU, OR ANYONE IN THE LANCER FAN CLUB!



so...
QC's DINER
who else knows about it?
MY EX-HUSBAND. THE MAYOR, AND HER HUSBAND. FATHER ALVIN.
THAT...THAT IS ALL.
old guard generation. figured as much.
I JUST...DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW YOU COULD KNOW!...

come on, lady. you **really** think something like that's gonna be secret forever?
might've taken way too long, but my organization's been investigating this one for years now.
INVESTIGATING...
your little town's gonna have a busy next few weeks.
hope you're ready for that.
so. why'd you do it?
I...I DO NOT NEED TO JUSTIFY MY ACTIONS TO YOU!...
why not? sweet old teacher like you?
must've had quite some time to practice justifying them to yourself.

SHOULD I NEED TO JUSTIFY WANTING TO PROTECT MY HOME? OUR CHILDREN?!
YOU DID NOT SEE THE VIOLENCE, THE DESTRUCTION, AS IT HAPPENED!
AND THAT HORRIBLE SCIENTIST, EXACERBATING IT!
WHAT WE DID WAS A KINDNESS!
uh-huh. and all that follow-up.
taking their homes. their possessions. their futures.
that was kindness, too?
WE DID NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHOICE!
sure you didn't, lady. i guess lying about it all for decades was kindness, too.

WE...I HAD TO...
i guess lying seems like the only option when the truth means your neighbors knowing just what they've built their lives on top of.
so...what about that human kid of yours? kris?
KRIS HAS NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH THIS!
WE FOUND THEM DECADES LATER, ONLY A TODDLER AND ABANDONED IN THE WOODS, WE—
that's not what i mean, lady. i mean, why'd you take them in?
was it guilt? trying to make up for old wrongs?

or maybe... still a bit of spite?
"oh, this one, i'll be able to raise right. i'll teach proper morals."
"not like **those** people--"
HOW *DARE* YOU SUGGEST SUCH A HORRIBLE THING! I *LOVE* KRIS!
YOU HAVE *NO* UNDERSTANDING WHAT THEY MEAN TO ME! WHAT I HAVE HAD TO ENDURE TO TRY AND RAISE THEM!
TINK TINK
sorry, lady, i just was--
LEAVE. NOW.
sure. whatever you say.

we'll finish this little chat some other day.
I DO NOT WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN. EVER.
no promises, old lady.
DING DING DING

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT...
KRIS...P-PLEASE...

DON'T THINK THIS IS THE SORT OF PLACE FOR YOU.
PLEASE...T-THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU!...
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS AND ISN'T ME?!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW ME!
BUT IT'S... STILL...THERE!
P-PLEASE... STOP MOVING LIKE THAT! YOU'RE S-SCARING ME!

...OH YEAH?
NNGH!
UUGH!
W-WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
UUGH!!
WHAT I WANT!

YOU'RE H-HURTING US BOTH!
AT LEAST IT'S ME DOING IT!
AT LEAST I GET A SAY!
S-STOP! PLEASE! I WANT TO HELP!...
THIS ISN'T STUPID HOMEWORK! PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO HELP!

THEY WANT TO BE NICE SO THEY CAN PRETEND THEY DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM!
T-THAT'S NOT TRUE!
IF IT WASN'T...THEN WHY WOULD YOU INSIST THIS ISN'T REALLY ME?
BOOM!
KRIS!
WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING WITH YOU?!
I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS... THING!
NO ONE EVER GETS IT! NO ONE UNDERSTANDS HOW I FEEL!

I-IT'S LIKE...YOU'RE MADE TO PLAY OUT A GAME, RIGHT? I'M A DARKNER! I GET IT!
IT'S...IT'S NOT BAD! RALSEI SAID IT WAS FULFILLING...
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME I'M PLAYING! NOBODY ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO DO THIS!
THIS...THIS DOESN'T FEEL FULFILLING!
AND I'M TIRED OF HAVING NO CHOICE!
KRIS—STOP! I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU KILL US ALL!

...GUESS WE WOULD JUST START ALL OVER IF I DID THAT, HUH?
START OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN, NONE OF IT MATTERING.
MAYBE...IT'LL WORK THIS TIME IF I DO NOTHING. MAYBE IT STOPS IF WE JUST STAY DOWN HERE IN HELL UNTIL WE STARVE TO DEATH.
HOW WOULD I FEEL ABOUT LOSING MY FACE, NOW?
YOU...YOU GOTTA STOP TALKING LIKE THIS!
I—I WAS WRONG, OKAY?! WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS!

OOF!
I! DON'T! BELIEVE YOU!
HOW CAN YOU BE FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE LIKE ME? HOW CAN ANYONE?!
WHEN I'M JUST A MEANS TO SOMEONE ELSE'S END!
WHEN I JUST EXIST TO SAVE OTHER PEOPLE!

BOOOOM

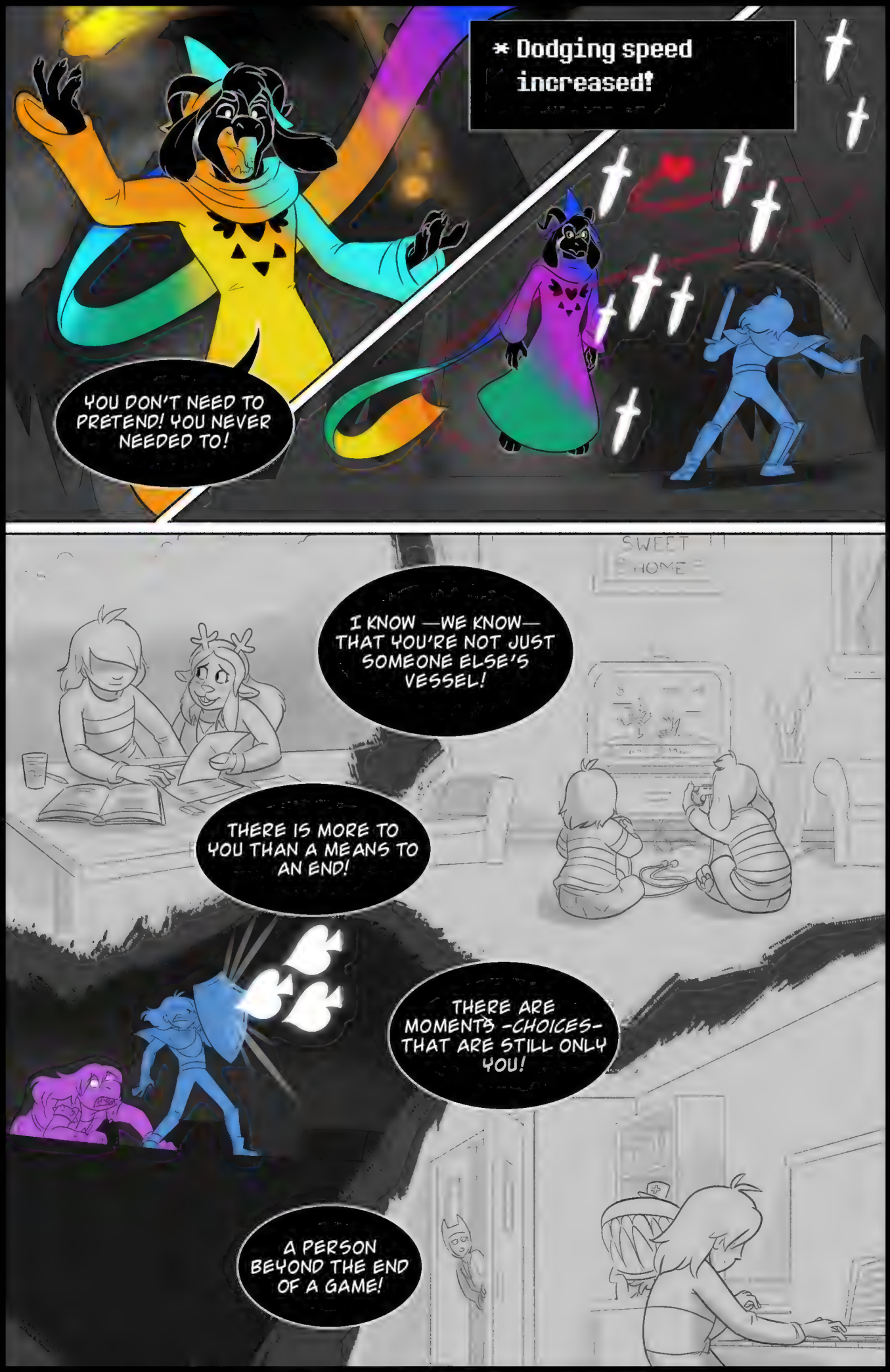
KRIS!

I AM GOING TO SAVE YOU!

* This is not a fight to win.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!!
-19
-38
-26

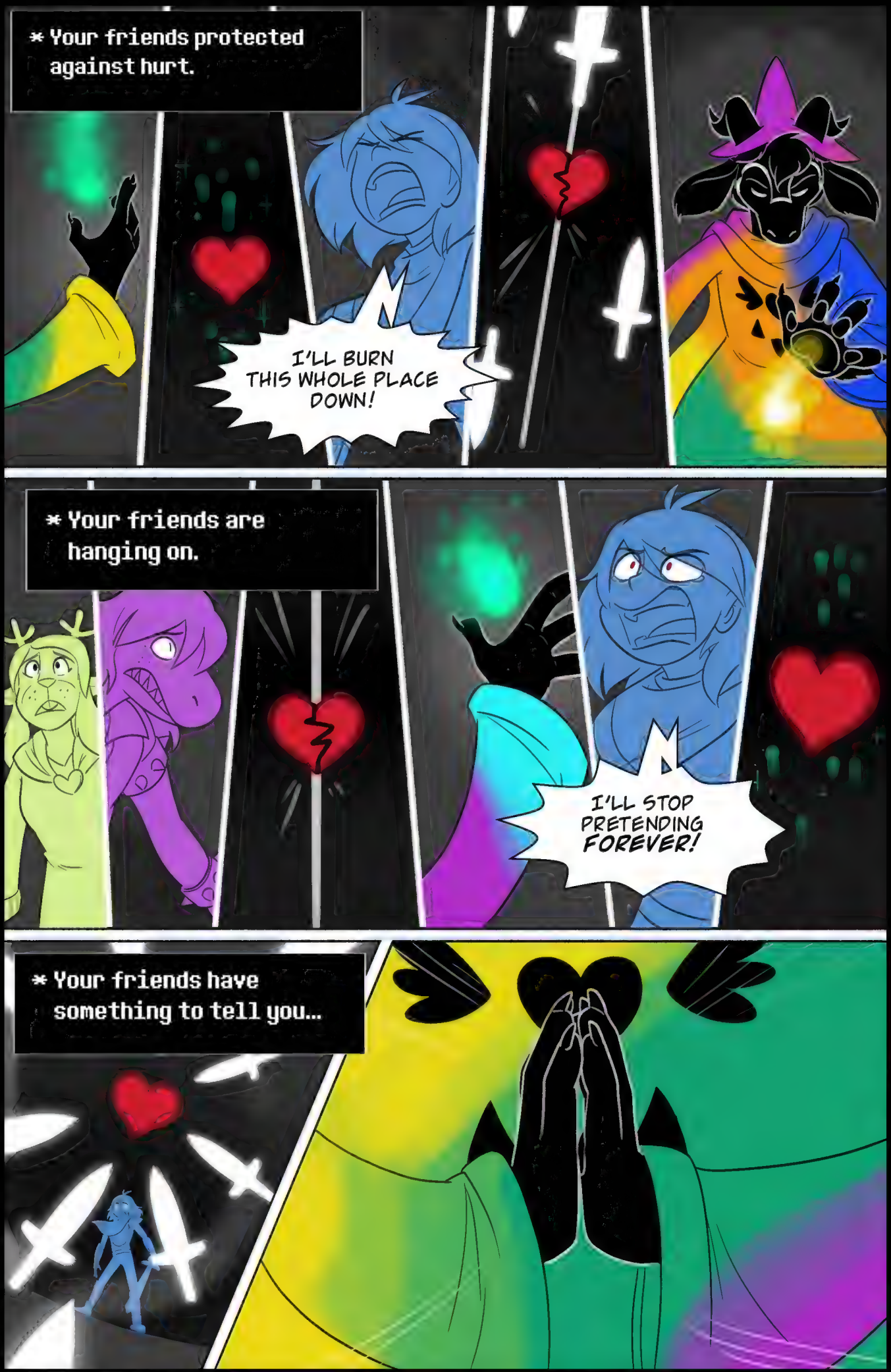
YOU CAN'T SAVE SOMETHING LIKE ME!
* Damage reduced!
BUT I'M GOING TO TRY ANYWAY.
YOU CAN'T DISSUADE ME.
* HP restored!
+23
+34

HOW CAN YOU HELP ME IF YOU DON'T KNOW ME?!
YOU MAY NOT SEE WHO YOU ARE...BUT I SEE IT!
TERRIBLE THINGS...
...AND WONDERFUL THINGS!
I CAN'T SEE THEM! I DON'T KNOW THEM!
I PLAY PRETEND AT BEING A HERO, BUT I NEVER FEEL LIKE ONE!


* Dodging speed increased!
YOU DON'T NEED TO PRETEND! YOU NEVER NEEDED TO!
SWEET HOME
I KNOW —WE KNOW— THAT YOU'RE NOT JUST SOMEONE ELSE'S VESSEL!
THERE IS MORE TO YOU THAN A MEANS TO AN END!
THERE ARE MOMENTS -CHOICES- THAT ARE STILL ONLY YOU!
A PERSON BEYOND THE END OF A GAME!

THAT IS WHAT WE WILL SAVE!
NOT THE HERO OF LEGEND, OR A PROPHESEID SAVIOR!
JUST YOU!
WHO CARES ABOUT SOME STUPID INVISIBLE THING CONTROLLING YOU? SCREW IT, WE'LL GET RID OF IT!
WE'RE FRIENDS WITH YOU, NOT THAT!
I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR OWN LIFE, KRIS! AND IF IT'S LOST SOMEHOW...WE'LL FIND IT FOR YOU!

IF YOU LIGHTNERS CAN STILL REACH OUT TO DARKNERS LIKE ME...WELL, I CAN DO THAT, TOO!
* Your friends healed you.
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!


* Your friends protected against hurt.
I'LL BURN THIS WHOLE PLACE DOWN!
* Your friends are hanging on.
I'LL STOP PRETENDING FOREVER!
* Your friends have something to tell you...

WHEN THE LIGHT IS RUNNING LOW...
AND THE SHADOWS START TO GROW...
AND THE PLACES THAT YOU KNOW, SEEM LIKE FANTASY...
THERE'S A LIGHT INSIDE YOUR SOUL

THAT'S STILL SHINING IN THE COLD...
WITH THE TRUTH, THE PROMISE IN OUR HEARTS...
DON'T FORGET...
...I'M WITH YOU IN THE DARK.

*They won!
H-HE...HE WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAME CLOSEST TO UNDERSTANDING.
THE ONLY ONE WHO REALLY LISTENED. MADE ME FEEL NORMAL.
I KEPT HOLDING ON...FOR HIM!

I KNOW HOW MUCH HE CARES ABOUT YOU. I'VE HEARD IT WHISPERED IN EVERY PROPHECY.
JUST KEEP COMING BACK TO THIS PLACE, JUST FINDING PIECES OF HIM OVER AND OVER...
AND THEN HE JUST LEFT! HE LEFT ME ALONE, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
KRIS...
IS DESTROYING EVERYTHING REALLY WHAT YOU WANT?
...NO. IT'S NOT.
I JUST...DON'T WANT TO BE THIS WAY ANYMORE!
HE LEFT ME, AND I'M ALONE IN THE DARK, AND I'M SCARED!

CAN'T YOU TELL? WE'RE ALL RIGHT HERE, TOO!
MAYBE HE'S NOT HERE RIGHT NOW...BUT WE ARE!
I'M SCARED, TOO...BUT THAT JUST MEANS YOU'RE NOT ALONE!
EVEN IN THE DARKEST PLACES...
...YOU WERE NEVER ALONE.

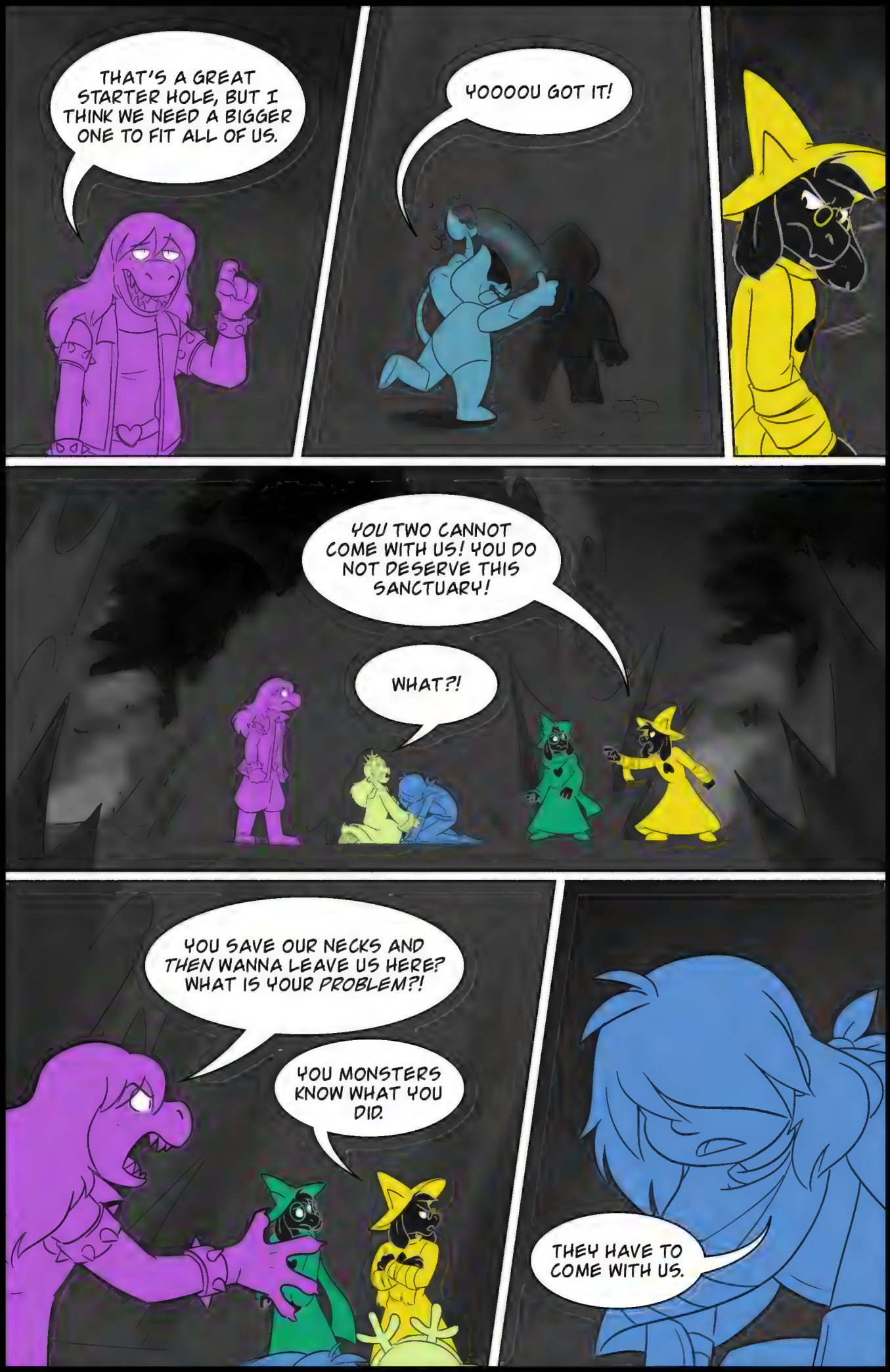
SO, ARE YOU, UH... SUPPOSED TO BE A GIANT ASRIEL, ORRR...
POOF!
AGGH!
OUCH!
OOF!
OoF!
VUGH!

O-OH MY GOODNESS! THAT WAS...INTENSE!
BUT NEEDED, APPARENTLY.
SERIOUSLY, WHAT WAS THAT?! DID YOU KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT?
THAT...CARTOON ROBOT TIGER WHATEVER?
UHH...N-NOT UNTIL IT HAPPENED, NO.
I HAD AN IDEA OF IT.
AND WHO THE HELL'RE YOU, AGAIN?

DARK PRINCE LAIRSE, STEWARD OF THE CHORAL WOODS AND THE DARK FOUNTAIN THAT FORMS IT.
AND YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME HERE!
WHAT THE—
WAIT, PLEASE—
THIS IS ALL THE LIGHTNER MONSTERS' FAULT!
HOLD ON, PLEASE, WE CAN'T ARGUE! WE JUST GOT KRIS BACK FROM THE EDGE, AND THEY STILL NEED OUR HELP!
CAN'T WE TALK ON THE WAY? IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THIS HORRIBLE PLACE?

THE HEAVEN ROAD SENDS YOU TO BE JUDGED. BUT THIS ROAD FORCES YOU TO JUDGE YOURSELF...
...AND THAT PUZZLE IS SPECIFICALLY MADE TO TRAP THOSE INTO THE WORST OF THEMSELVES.
WHICH MEANS, IT'S NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO CLIMB OUT WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP.
YOU MEAN...WE'RE REALLY STUCK DOWN HERE?
UNLESS ONE OF YOUR DARKNER FRIENDS STAYING AT MY CABIN THINKS TO WANDER IN THIS DIRECTION WITH A VERY LONG ROPE...
...WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY.
WAIT...THE DARKNERS ARE AT YOUR CABIN?
YES. AS I SAID, I'M THE STEWARD OF THIS FOUNTAIN AND THIS LAND.
I TRY TO KEEP TRACK OF EVERYONE WHO ENTERS THE CHORAL WOODS.

CAN WE SHOUT TO 'EM FROM HERE? MAYBE THEY'LL HEAR US!
MY CABIN IS NOT FAR FROM THE END OF THE CAVERN, BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR THE CRIES OF THE DAMNED, THANK YOU.
OH! WELL, THEN I CAN STILL FIX THAT!
DIG
DIG
DIG
SKRR
DIG
DIG
SKRRK
SKRRT
DIG
I'VE GOT A LOTTA DIGGING PRACTICE. I CAN DIG A WHOLE TUNNEL OUTTA HERE!
SEE? I MADE THE BEST HOLE THERE IS... LANCER-SHAPED!


THAT'S A GREAT STARTER HOLE, BUT I THINK WE NEED A BIGGER ONE TO FIT ALL OF US.
YOOOOU GOT IT!
YOU TWO CANNOT COME WITH US! YOU DO NOT DESERVE THIS SANCTUARY!
WHAT?!
YOU SAVE OUR NECKS AND *THEN* WANNA LEAVE US HERE? WHAT IS YOUR *PROBLEM*?!
YOU MONSTERS KNOW WHAT YOU DID.
THEY HAVE TO COME WITH US.

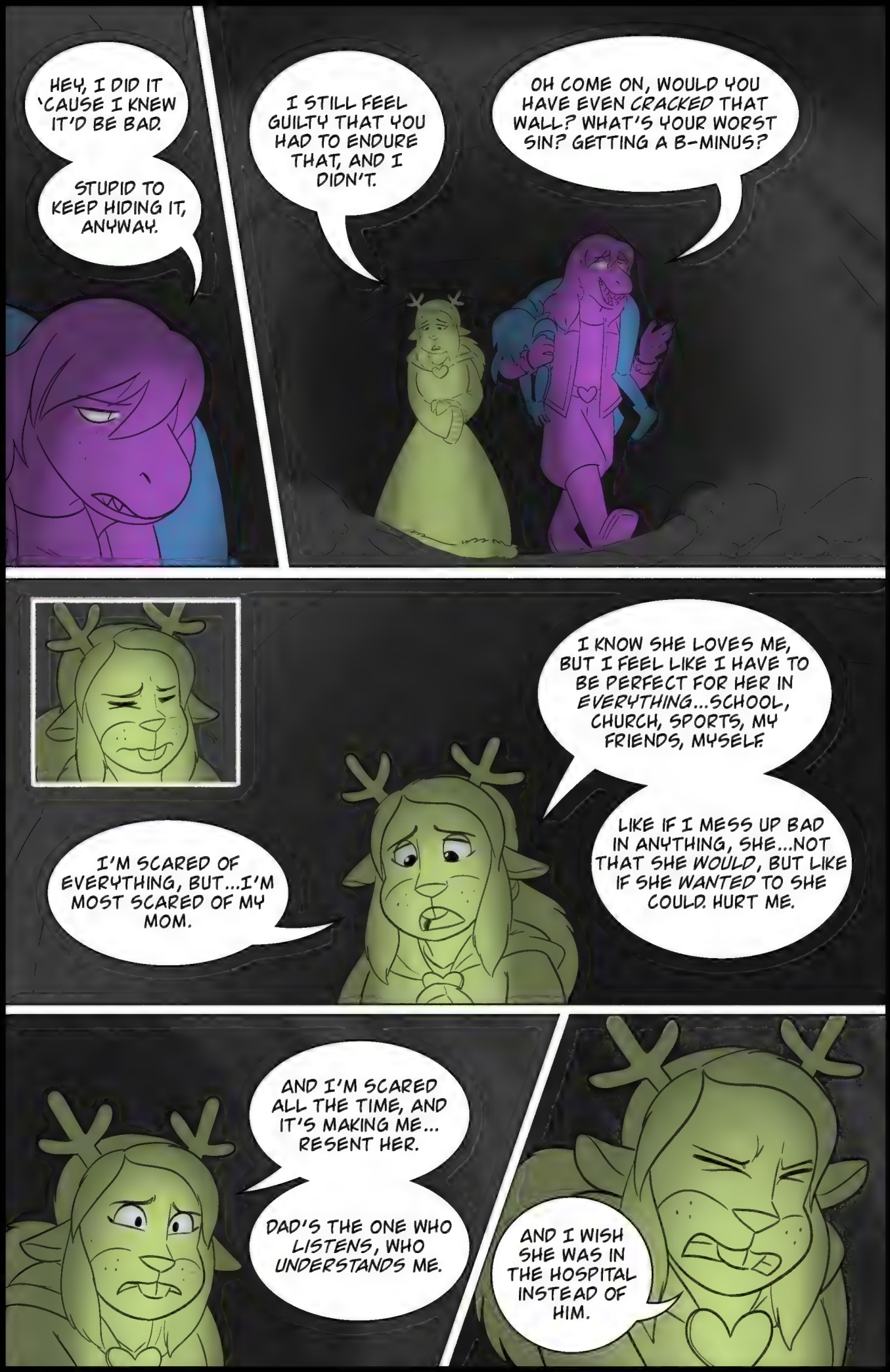
THAT'S RIGHT!
BUT THEY—
I CAN'T GO BACK WITHOUT THEM. EVEN IF IT DIDN'T MEAN OTHERS COMING TO LOOK FOR THEM...
...I NEED THEM. THEY'RE MY FRIENDS.
FINE. I SUPPOSE IN THIS SITUATION, IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
BUT I EXPECT YOU TO BEGIN WORK ON *REPENTING* THE MOMENT YOU RETURN TO YOUR WORLD!

SURE, WHATEVER, SOUR LEMON.
O-OKAY...
HEY GUYS, COME POINT ME IN THE DIRECTION I SHOULD KEEP DIGGIN'!
KRIS...DO YOU WANT TO LEAD THE WAY?
NO. I'M...SO TIRED.
I DON'T WANT TO PLAY ANYMORE.

HEY, IT'S OKAY.
YOU DON'T NEED TO ALL THE TIME.
WE CAN LEAD FOR AWHILE.

HEY...SORRY YOU GOT CAUGHT UP IN ALL THIS. DIDN'T THINK OUR ADVENTURES WOULD END UP...IN THAT WAY.
SUSIE...YOU DON'T H-HAVE TO FEEL SORRY...
WHAT? YOU DON'T THINK WHAT WE SAID AND DID BACK UP THERE WAS SERIOUSLY SCREWED UP?
W-WELL...YES, BUT...

MOSTLY...I'M JUST SAD THAT YOU AND KRIS WERE BOTH *HURTING* THIS MUCH, FOR THIS LONG...
AND DIDN'T THINK YOU COULD TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT.
DIDN'T WANT TO. MY BAD CHOICES ARE MINE TO DEAL WITH.
KRIS'S BAD CHOICES ARE...COMPLICATED AND ***WEIRD***, I GUESS.
MMHMM.
I DON'T THINK IT'S...QUITE LIKE THAT.
...I SHOULDN'T HAVE HESITATED LIKE THAT.
I SHOULD'VE TAKEN THE CHAIR TO PROTECT KRIS...OR YOU.


HEY, I DID IT 'CAUSE I KNEW IT'D BE BAD.
STUPID TO KEEP HIDING IT, ANYWAY.
I STILL FEEL GUILTY THAT YOU HAD TO ENDURE THAT, AND I DIDN'T.
OH COME ON, WOULD YOU HAVE EVEN CRACKED THAT WALL? WHAT'S YOUR WORST SIN? GETTING A B-MINUS?
I KNOW SHE LOVES ME, BUT I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO BE PERFECT FOR HER IN EVERYTHING...SCHOOL, CHURCH, SPORTS, MY FRIENDS, MYSELF.
LIKE IF I MESS UP BAD IN ANYTHING, SHE...NOT THAT SHE WOULD, BUT LIKE IF SHE WANTED TO SHE COULD. HURT ME.
I'M SCARED OF EVERYTHING, BUT...I'M MOST SCARED OF MY MOM.
AND I'M SCARED ALL THE TIME, AND IT'S MAKING ME... RESENT HER.
DAD'S THE ONE WHO LISTENS, WHO UNDERSTANDS ME.
AND I WISH SHE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL INSTEAD OF HIM.

SUSIE'S IS STILL ABOUT 10% WORSE.
SHUT UP.
GOSH, EVEN *THAT* FELT SCARY TO SAY...P-PROMISE YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE?
IF YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT MY FREAKISH EATING PROBLEM, SURE.
OF COURSE.
GOT IT.

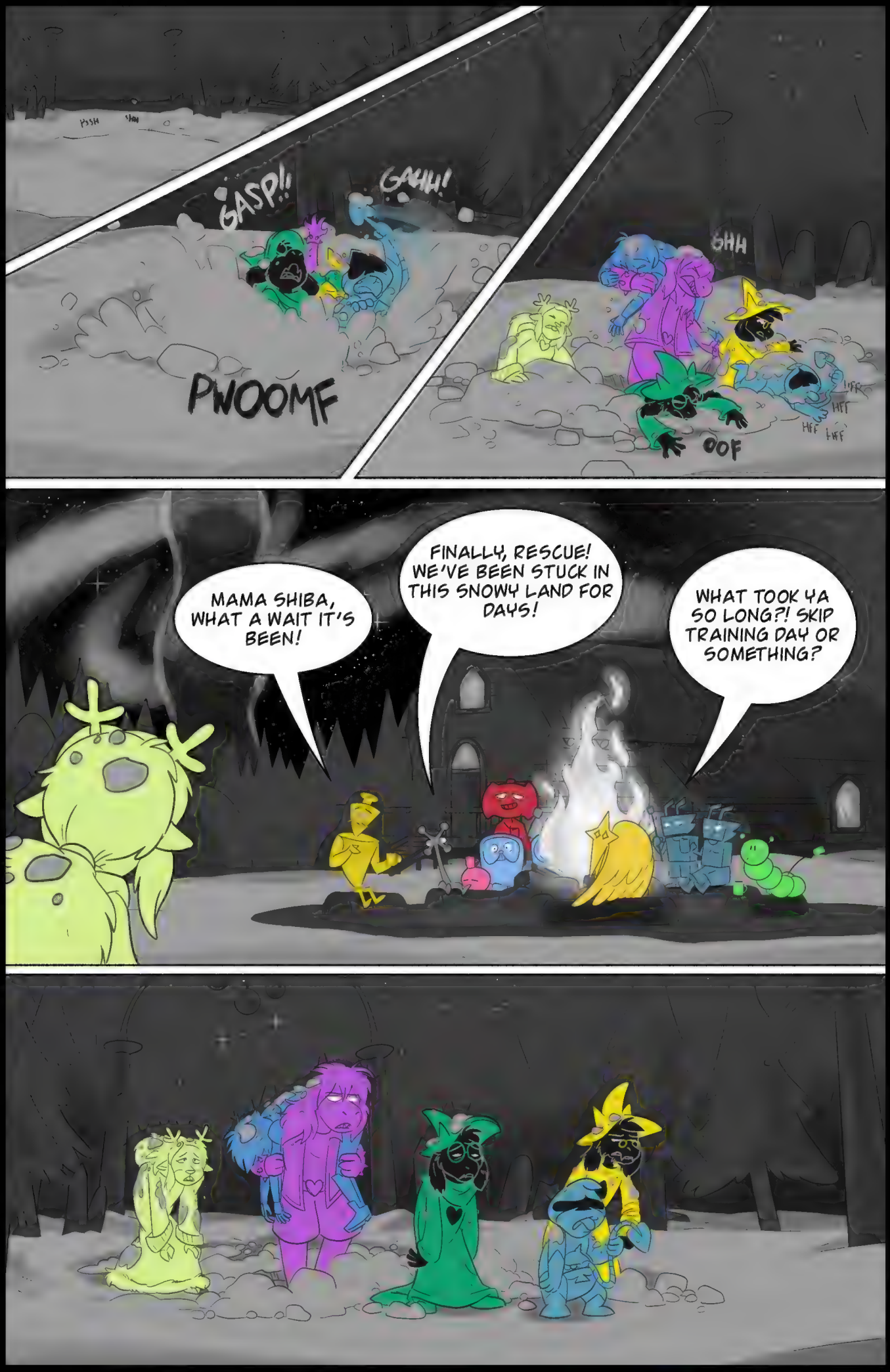
DO YOU THINK, MAYBE...LAIRSE IS RIGHT ABOUT US?
I THINK SOUR LEMON'S GOT HIS OWN ISSUES TO WORK OUT.
THERE SURE IS...A LOT THAT'S COMING TOGETHER NOW.
THERE IS.
THERE'S ONE THING I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND...HOW DID YOU KNOW WE COULD DO THAT?
OR EVEN THAT THERE WERE MORE PRINCES LIKE US?
I DIDN'T KNOW FOR SURE. BUT I SURMISED...
BASED ON THE WORDS OF A STRANGER...

...FROM NOT LONG AGO.
WONDERFUL...
FIVE OF YOU, NOW...
CLAK
CLAK
CLAK
CLAK
CLAK
FWOOM
WHO'S THERE?!
JUST A FEW MORE...
BROUGHT TOGETHER...
WHAT A POWER
THAT WOULD BE.
WHAT...ARE YOU?

HOW DEARLY I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT...
SPEAK PLAINLY! THERE ARE MORE OF ME?!
ALMOST
ENOUGH OF YOU.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
LITTLE PRINCE...
A TRAIL...
MERELY A PATH,
TO FREEDOM.

THAT KNIGHT... HE'S BEEN HOUNDING US ACROSS ALL THE LANDS WE'VE BEEN TO!
HE CAUSED THE TROUBLES WITH THE SPADE KING TO BEGIN WITH! BUT HE NEVER CONFRONTS US DIRECTLY...
THE HUMAN, KRIS... YOU AND I CAN BOTH SEE. THEY ARE BOTH DARKNER AND LIGHTNER AT ONCE.
THAT'S NOT NATURAL, WHICH MEANS IT WAS NOT BY ACCIDENT.
THEIR SOUL, THE FOUNTAINS IT RESONATES WITH, AND US...ALL CONNECTED.
YOU THINK...THE KNIGHT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR KRIS'S CONDITION?
THE DARK WORLD IS ONE OF DREAMS AND IMAGINATION. OF GAMES AND FUN MADE REAL.

BUT IN HIS VOICE...WAS THE MOST CRUEL IMAGINATION I'VE EVER HEARD.
I THINK IT'S POSSIBLE.
WHEN I FIRST MET KRIS AND SUSIE...I WAS SO HAPPY. I REALLY THOUGHT I COULD HELP THEM, AND OUR WORLD, WITH KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP.
I STILL THINK THAT.
BUT...I REALIZE NOW THAT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED A WHOLE LOT... PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE, BRAVERY, INTEGRITY...
EVEN JUSTICE.
EVEN WITH THAT... THERE'S STILL TOO MANY QUESTIONS. THERE'S STILL SOMETHING IMPORTANT MISSING.
DIG
SEARCH
DIG
HEY GUYS, GET READY, WE'RE ABOUT OUT!

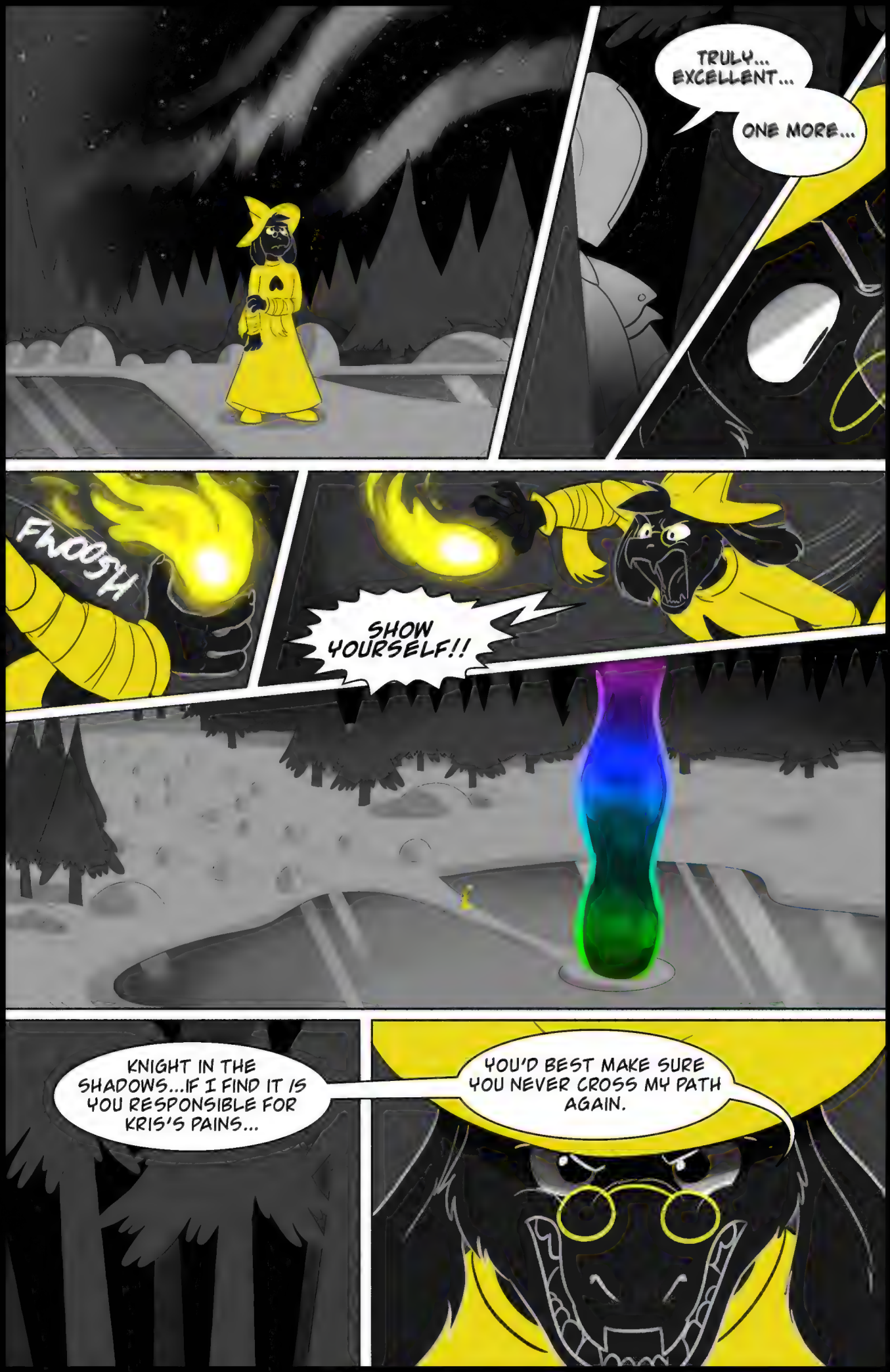

PSSH
SHH
GASP!!
GAHH!
PWOOMF
GHH
OOF
HFF
HFF
HFF
MAMA SHIBA, WHAT A WAIT IT'S BEEN!
FINALLY, RESCUE! WE'VE BEEN STUCK IN THIS SNOWY LAND FOR DAYS!
WHAT TOOK YA SO LONG?! SKIP TRAINING DAY OR SOMETHING?

HEY UHH...LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS HAD A ROUGH TIME GETTING HERE.
SO, THANKS FOR COMING ALL THE WAY OUT FOR EVEN A LITTLE BALL LIKE ME.
THE LIGHTNERS WOULDN'T LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND!
LAIRSE...THANK YOU FOR SAVING US BACK THERE. WE WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN OUT WITHOUT YOU.

WELL, I DIDN'T HAVE MANY OTHER OPTIONS.
I MEAN BEFORE THAT. YOU MUST'VE SEEN US GO DOWN THE HELL PATH...
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO FOLLOW US. OR REACH OUT LIKE YOU DID.
I GUESS THAT MEANS...THERE'S STILL SOME PART OF YOU THAT CARES ABOUT KRIS, TOO?
ENOUGH THAT YOU'LL EVEN ALLOW MONSTERS A CHANCE AT REDEMPTION?
I JUST...WANT JUSTICE FOR THEM, IS ALL. HOWEVER THAT MAY LOOK.

LAST OF THESE FOUNTAINS.
GOTTA SAY...I'LL BE GLAD TO GET BACK TO THE REAL WORLD FOR ONCE.
THANK YOU.
SAFE TRAVELS, LIGHTNER.

LAIRSE! I JUST REALIZED THAT I NEVER...
WHAT IS THE LEGEND THAT YOU'VE KNOWN ALL YOUR LIFE?
~~4EONS~~ AGO, TWO RACES ~~LIVED~~ ON THE ~~EARTH~~: HUMANS AND MONSTERS.
ONE DAY, A ~~WAR~~ BROKE OUT BETWEEN THE TWO RACES.
AFTER A LONG ~~BATTLE~~, THE ~~MONSTERS~~ WERE VICTORIOUS.
THEY SEALED THE ~~MONSTERS~~ UNDERGROUND WITH AN ~~UNBREAKABLE~~ LOCK...
FWOOOOOM
I'M SORRY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND—


TRULY... EXCELLENT...
ONE MORE...
FWOOSH
SHOW YOURSELF!!
KNIGHT IN THE SHADOWS...IF I FIND IT IS YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR KRIS'S PAINS...
YOU'D BEST MAKE SURE YOU NEVER CROSS MY PATH AGAIN.

FWUMP
UGH!
OOF!
GGHH

OH MY GOODNESS...I-I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE BACK HOME!

CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE NOT DEAD...

THIS IS WHAT'S IN THE CHURCH ATTIC?
ACTUALLY...I THINK WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT.
WE TRAVELED TWO WHOLE FLOORS AWAY?!
KRIS...A-ARE YOU OKAY?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
FWIP FWIP

KRIS...?
ALL OF THE PRINCES WE MET...WERE DIARIES ASRIEL WROTE ON THE BACK OF THESE PUZZLES.
THINGS WITH...SECRETS. THINGS ABOUT ME.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US?
DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT. DIDN'T KNOW IF I SHOULD.
WAIT, SO...THAT PUZZLE THERE... THAT'S LAIRSE?

OH...MY...
WHAT THE HELL.
SHOULD WE, UM...ASK AN ADULT ABOUT THIS?
NO...I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD.
MOM TOLD ME ABOUT THE BUNKER.
I'M SO ANGRY. I'M SO ANGRY!!
HOW COULD THEY DO THIS?! HOW COULD EVERYONE JUST NEVER ASK?? IS THIS WHY KRIS ALWAYS ACTED THAT WAY? DID THEY SOMEHOW KNOW, TOO?
AND THE WORST PART IS, MOM'S RIGHT AND I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT OR EVERYONE WILL ... IT'LL ALL BE OVER.
I HATE THIS TOWN. I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M GOING TO FORGIVE MOM AND DAD.
I'M LEAVING HERE. GOT ALL THOSE COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE LETTERS, I'M GOING TO THE REALLY GOOD ONE UP THE OTHER END OF THE COUNTRY. GET AS FAR FROM THIS PLACE AS I CAN. MAYBE I'LL FIGURE OUT... SOMETHING. I JUST NEED TO GET AWAY FROM HERE.
I'M SORRY KRIS
ASRIEL

Chapter Seven

Asriel

AH, THERE YOU ARE. SO GOOD TO SEE YOU.
I TRUST CLEANING WENT WELL?
U-UHHH...
FATHER ALVIN...I-I'M SO SORRY, AFTER WE PROMISED...
BUT W-WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY GET THE CHANCE TO...REALLY DO ANY CLEANING...

NO CLEANING, YOU SAY?
EHH, DON'T YOU KIDS WORRY ABOUT IT. DIDN'T EXPECT CLEANING TO HAPPEN, ANYWAY.
YOU...YOU DIDN'T?
'COURSE NOT. COUPLE OF TEENS, COMPLETELY UNPROMPTED, NO SCHOOL OR PARENTS ASKING FOR IT, JUST OFFERING TO CLEAN A CHURCH SPACE?
HEHHEH I'M TOO OLD TO BE THAT NAIVE.
THEN WHY'D YOU EVEN LET US GO UP THERE?

WELL...LET ME ASK. DID YOU HAVE FUN?
IN A WAY.
THEN THAT'S ALL I NEED. HAVING FUN MAKES YOU CARE.
SO, HAVING FUN AT CHURCH...WELL, THAT'S A GOOD STEP TOWARDS CARING ABOUT IT.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED, I WON'T TELL YOUR FOLKS. NO NEED TO DISAPPOINT ME OR ANYONE ELSE FOR NO GOOD REASON.
AND I KNOW HOW EASY IT IS FOR KIDS YOUR AGE...
...TO GET LOST IN YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD.

NOW, YOU KIDS BEST GET ALONG, IT'S NEARLY DARK.
RAIN'S ABOUT LET UP, SO YOU SHOULD BE FINE GETTING HOME.
UMM...T-THANK YOU, FATHER ALVIN.
ANGEL'S BLESSINGS TO YOU.
I'LL SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.
SO...TOMORROW. WE BRING EVERYONE BACK TO THE EMPTY CLASSROOM. AFTER CLASS.

KRIS...ARE YOU OKAY? HOW DO YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW?
LIKE ALWAYS.
HEY.
WE MIGHT'VE FOUND EVERYONE IN THE DARK WORLD, BUT WE STILL GOT AN IMPORTANT QUEST!
WE'RE GONNA *FIX* YOUR SOUL. OKAY? WE'RE GONNA GET RID OF WHATEVER'S CONTROLLING IT. GET YOU YOUR OWN LIFE!
S-SUSIE'S RIGHT! WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS, AND WE'RE NOT GIVING UP ON YOU, KRIS!

HOW?
I DUNNO HOW, BUT... WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT, SAME WAY WE DID THIS WHOLE THING!
AZZY'S HOME TOMORROW, RIGHT? WE'LL ASK FOR HIS HELP! HE'S GOT TO KNOW, BETTER THAN ANYONE! WE CAN ASK HIM ABOUT WHAT HIS DIARY MEANT, TOO!
YEAH!
YOU'D... REALLY TRY TO DO THAT?
YEAH.
EVEN...WHAT IF...FIXING THIS SOUL MEANT WE COULDN'T GO TO THE DARK WORLD ANYMORE?
WOULD YOU... STILL DO IT?

...YEAH. EVEN...EVEN THAT.
...OF COURSE, KRIS.
OKAY.
POOR AZZY...WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SO MANY WEIRD QUESTIONS AND STORIES FOR HIM WHEN HE GETS BACK.

"WELCOME BACK, ASRIEL! HEY, CAN YOU HELP US FIX YOUR ADOPTED SIBLING'S SOUL? IT'S BEEN HIJACKED BY SOME INVISIBLE DOOM ENTITY!"
"WE WOULD ASK THESE OTHER-DIMENSIONAL WIZARD CLONES OF YOURSELF YOU MADE BY LEAVING CRYPTIC NOTES AROUND, BUT THEY ONLY SPEAK IN FANTASY GAME LEGENDS! HOPE UNIVERSITY'S GOOD!"
HEE HEE HEE
HA HA HA
HEH HEH
FEEL LIKE WE NEED A BETTER NAME THAN "INVISIBLE DOOM ENTITY."
WAIT A MINUTE!!
IS THAT WHO "Z" WAS THIS WHOLE DAMN TIME?!!

CLICK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

KRIS! SUSIE! Y-
YOU ACTUALLY M-
MADE IT!
THANK GOODNESS! I...
WE-WE WERE ALL
REALLY WORRIED!

I-IT'S GOOD YOU MADE IT TODAY! SINCE, UM...YOUR PROJECTS ARE DUE TODAY...
I-I HOPE EVERYONE REMEMBERED...
SORRY. WE... I'VE HAD STUFF COME UP.
OH! W-WELL, ABOUT THAT...I-I DON'T THINK I CAN GIVE YOU FULL CREDIT...
O-OH. OH DEAR.
AND I ASSUMED...YOU BROUGHT PACKS AND EVERYTHING...
CAN WE DO A MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENT?
...BUT Y-YES, OF COURSE! W-WE CAN TALK ABOUT A MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENT LATER, OKAY?

OKAY.
WELL, SOME OF US GOT THE PROJECT DONE EARLY INSTEAD OF WASTING TIME DOING WHATEVER.
FWIP
RIGHT, NOELLE?
IT'S NOT THAT THEY'RE LAZY! JUST... THOSE HARD THINGS, THEY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FIRST.
W-WELL... SOMETIMES... PEOPLE'VE GOT OTHER, REALLY HARD THINGS HAPPENING IN THEIR LIFE...THAT WE CAN'T SEE.
T-THAT'S TRUE! IT'S EVEN A THEME IN THE BOOK!
WELL DONE, NOELLE. W-WHY DON'T YOU AND BERDLY DO YOUR PRESENTATION FIRST.

RRRING!!

BLOCKS
WELCOME HOME, BUDDY.
KRIS!

I WAS JUST COMING TO GET YOU, YOU WERE NOT IN YOUR CLASSROOM...
IS THIS...ALL OF THE OLD THINGS I CLEANED OUT LAST WEEK?
U-UH...
YOU WENT AROUND AND BROUGHT ALL OF THAT BACK? WHY?!
I...I HAD TO...
KRIS, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
JUST THAT... THIS WAS KRIS'S IDEA!
TO USE THIS EMPTY CLASSROOM AS A...MENTAL HEALTH BREAK ROOM!

A MENTAL HEALTH BREAK ROOM?
Y-YEAH. YOU KNOW HOW STRESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL GETS... WORRYING ABOUT GRADES, AND PROJECTS, AND APPLYING FOR UNIVERSITY.
SO KRIS THOUGHT, UM... THIS ROOM COULD BE FOR DE-STRESSING, WITH GAMES, AND...
Y-YEAH, THEY TOLD ME ABOUT IT, AND UHHH I REALLY NEED MENTAL HEALTH... STUFF...
SO I SAID I'D HELP THEM FIND GAMES FOR IT...
AND I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA, SO I HELPED, TOO.
STUDENTS COULD, UM... SIGN UP TO USE THE ROOM, IF THEY WANTED? LIKE A SCHEDULE, SO TEACHERS KNOW THEY'RE NOT SKIPPING SCHOOL.
IF...THAT'S OKAY.

I...YES, KRIS, OF COURSE A BREAK IF YOU ARE STRESSED IS PERFECTLY FINE!
BUT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND... WHY DID YOU NOT TELL ME ABOUT THIS? WHY WERE YOU KEEPING THIS SECRET?
UMM...
JUST...
I...I DON'T THINK THEY MEANT IT TO BE SECRET, MS. TORIEL.
JUST SOMETIMES, UM... IT'S VERY HARD TO TELL PEOPLE, UH...IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT THEY'D THINK.
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S PEOPLE YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT.
YOU UNDERSTAND... DON'T YOU, MS. TORIEL?
OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND, KRIS...I ONLY WISH YOU HAD FELT SAFE ENOUGH TO TELL ME EARLIER!

SO...IT'S OKAY?
AS LONG AS THERE IS AN ESTABLISHED SCHEDULE AND SET OF RULES, YES, I BELIEVE THIS SORT OF SPACE IS FINE.
THANK YOU, MS. TORIEL.
THANK YOU.
HEY, NOT TO RUSH OR ANYTHING...BUT IS IT OKAY IF WE USE IT NOW?
WELL, KRIS, NO MORE THAN AN HOUR FOR YOU.
THE BUS WITH ASRIEL SHOULD BE IN BY 6:00, AND I WANT YOU HOME BEFORE THEN. OKAY?
ALL RIGHT.

KRIS, I...
...I LOVE YOU.
YOU KNOW THAT...
DO YOU NOT?
YES.
1000 PCS

YOU GUYS READY?
HERE WE GO.

WOW! THIS IS LANCER'S HOME?
YEAH! BUT...WHERE IS EVERYONE?
CREEEAK
SURPRISE!!!

CONGRATS PARD'NERS, YOU'VE DONE FINE WORK!
MAMA MIBA, IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!
THE CASTLE'S NEVER BEEN IN BETTER SHAPE!
WHAT A RELIEF! NOW I CAN GET A SHAVE...AND SOME NEW PUZZLES MADE!
BACK TO EATIN' LEAVES OFF THAT TREE...
SUSIE, SUSIE LOOK! THE CASTLE'S LOOKIN' BETTER THAN FRESH PEACH PIE!
DAMN, IT REALLY IS!
KRIS!
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THOUGH SO MUCH, BUT...YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR US, TOO!

AFTER THE GREAT CALAMITY, WE HAD OUR DOUBTS ABOUT LANCER PUTTING HIS TRUST IN LIGHTNERS...
...BUT IT SEEMS YOU ALL CAME THROUGH IN THE END!
AN IMPROVEMENT OVER CATASTROPHE, TO BE SURE.
YOU KNOW...YOU MIGHT START SEEING OTHER LIGHTNERS AROUND HERE, TOO.
NEW LIGHTNERS?
YEAH!
THIS NERD NEGOTIATED ALL SMART-LIKE SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN COME TO YOUR SPACE IN OUR WORLD! SO... NEW LIGHTNERS!

YOU'RE NOT ABANDONED. NOT FORGOTTEN.
WOOOO! YEEAH!
YAAAY!
AMAZING!
YAAY
HUZZAH!
WAHOO!
I THINK THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION!
YEEAA!
WOOHOO!
ALL RIGHT!
HUZZAH
YEEAAY!
YEAAH!
YES!
LET'S GO!

NICE MOVES
WANNA TRY!
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
HEY, HAS ANYONE SEEN CLOVER
THERE I WAS, TRAPPEST ON TOPPETH A PERILOUS PEAK...
SO COOL!
MAMA MIBO, MAKE WAY!
AND THEN HE WAS...
SO, LANCER...YOU FEELING BETTER ABOUT BEING KING NOW?
YOU BET! WITH YOU GUYS AS FRIENDS, I KNOW I CAN HANDLE ANYTHING!

...EVEN YOUR DAD?
EVEN HIM! HE WAS STILL BEING ALL MR. RAGE CAKE, SO WE LOCKED HIM IN THE SUPER-DUPER SECRET DUNGEON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CASTLE.
AND WE RE-BROKE THE KEY, SO HE'S GOT NO CHANCE OF ESCAPING!
"SECRET" DUNGEON?
WHERE THAT AWFUL JESTER WAS.
MIGHT AS WELL USE THAT SPACE FOR SOMETHIN'.
WHAT AWFUL JESTER?

IT'S IN MY INVENTORY. I JUST NEVER EQUIPPED—
EQUIPPED
Wood Blade
Amber Card
Dice Brace
ARMORS
Amber Card
Plush Helmet
Part Trophy
KRIS...?
...IT'S NOT THERE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S LOST. IT MUST'VE...FALLEN OUT OF MY INVENTORY AT SOME POINT?
WHEN? WHERE?

CRASH
UGH!
...I DON'T KNOW.
UHH...C-CAN'T SAY I... REALLY LIKE THOSE LOOKS YOU'RE GIVING.

MY KNIGHT!
YOU...YOU LIED ABOUT...
HAVE YOU COME TO FREE ME?

OH NO, DEAR KING.
I'M AFRAID
YOU MUST REMAIN HERE.
BUT...WHY?! YOU SAID IF I HELPED...
YOU SAID SO YOURSELF
YOU ARE THE BAD GUY.
AND WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BAD GUY, KING,
AT THE END OF THE STORY?
HE IS BEATEN
IMPRISONED
BY THE HEROES.
NO LONGER A THREAT.
A HAPPY ENDING.
YOU...YOU BETRAYED ME, ALL ALONG!...
NO.
I HAVE DONE
EXACTLY AS I PROMISED
A NEW WORLD APPROACHES.
ONE RULED BY DARKNESS.
DARKNESS IS SPREADING.
EVEN NOW
OVERTAKING THE LIGHT.

BUT...YOU PROMISED...
I NEVER PROMISED YOU,
SPECIFICALLY,
WOULD RULE IT.
ONLY THAT THE LIGHTNERS
WOULD BE PUNISHED
FOR THOSE THEY ABANDONED
AND FORGOT.
DON'T LOOK SO GLUM.
YOUR WISHES WILL SOON
BE FULFILLED
WERE THOSE...REALLY MY WISHES?
OR JUST WHAT YOU WANTED ME TO WANT, ALL ALONG?
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE,
TO A DARKNER LIKE YOU?
YOU WANT WHAT YOU WANT,
AND WHAT YOU WANT...
IS WHAT THE ONE
HOLDING THE CARDS WANTS.

MY KNIGHT...WHO... WHAT ARE YOU? REALLY?
IF YOU MUST KNOW...
I AM NOT THE ONE
HOLDING THE CARDS...
MERELY...
STACKING THE DECK,
YOU MIGHT SAY.
Y...YOU..! YOU'RE A LIGHTNER!
I KNOW HANDS VERY WELL.
LIKE A LANGUAGE.
YOUR HAND
IS PLAYED.

YOU LIAR!!
NO LIE.
MERELY ASSUMPTIONS,
DISPROVEN.
YOU FILTHY LIAR!!!
IT IS USELESS
I SUPPOSE
TO CONTINUE...
AND I HAVE ANOTHER,
MORE PRESSING ENGAGEMENT.

GET BACK HERE! YOU DARE MAKE A FOOL OUT OF ME?!!
FAREWELL, KING.
WE WILL NOT MEET AGAIN.
RAAAAAAA
GH

YOU GUYS REALLY GOTTA GO ALREADY?
YEAH...IT SUCKS, BUT WE PROMISED.
WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE BACK?
I DUNNO...
WE GOTTA FIGURE OUT A LOT OF STUFF IN OUR OWN WORLD, LIKE HOW TO FIX *THIS* SOUL WEIRDNESS, YOU KNOW?
CLEAR AS CANDY!
WELL, IF YOU EVER NEED *OUR* HELP, YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO!
I KNOW IT. DARK FUN GANG FOR LIFE!

KRIS, IN EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED...I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO APOLOGIZE.
I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING IMPORTANT THINGS FROM YOU.
I THOUGHT THAT KEEPING QUIET WAS THE KINDER THING TO DO. NOW I REALIZE THAT...IT'S A LOT MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT.
THE PROPHECY I WAS SO SURE ABOUT... IT'S VERY STRANGE WHEN YOU REALIZE SOMETHING YOU'VE BELIEVED YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS JUST PART OF SOMETHING HUGE THAT YOU DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND.
WE'RE ALL BACK HOME. I THINK...I'M READY TO HEAR EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.
EVEN THE BAD.
I KNOW I'M JUST... FROM A PIECE OF ASRIEL THAT HE LEFT BEHIND. HE KNOWS THINGS I DON'T, AND I KNOW THINGS HE DOESN'T.

I KNEW, SINCE I FIRST SAW YOU, THAT YOU'RE BOTH DARKNER AND LIGHTNER. I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT HAPPENED, OR WHO MADE YOU THAT WAY.
BUT I KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING...MUCH BIGGER, MOVING YOU, THE SAME WAY LIGHTNERS GUIDE DARKNERS.
I REALLY HOPED THAT BY ENCOURAGING YOU TOWARDS KINDNESS...I COULD KEEP YOU FROM BEING HURT, SOMEHOW, IF THAT THING WASN'T SO KIND ITSELF.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE *WHY* I KNEW THOSE THINGS...IT SEEMED AS OBVIOUS TO ME AS THE PROPHECY.
MAYBE...IT DIDN'T EVEN MATTER WHAT THE BIGGER THING DID. ACTING OR FIGHTING, HEAVEN OR HELL...WE'RE STILL HERE NOW.
I DON'T KNOW. THERE'S ONE THING I *DO* KNOW MATTERS...I'M HERE AT ALL BECAUSE OF ASRIEL.

BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU, VERY MUCH.
DON'T FORGET THAT, OKAY?
KRIS...?
HAD TO PRACTICE HUGGING THAT DUMMY FOR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
H-HAHA, RIGHT!
I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU IN THIS WORLD. BUT THERE'S PEOPLE IN YOUR WORLD WHO REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU, TOO!

I KNOW WHATEVER HAPPENS... THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.
I KNOW.
HEY GUYS, I HATE TO LEAVE, BUT...WE SHOULD PROBABLY HEAD BACK. IT'S BEEN AN HOUR.
BYE NERDS!
SEE YOU.
GOODBYE!
STAY FROSTY, YA SUGAR CUPCAKES!

THE KNIGHT WHO PULL
THE FOUNTAINS FROM
EARTH
RALSEI, WE DON'T HAVE LIGHT FOUNTAINS.
KRIS'S SOUL... RESONATES WITH THE FOUNTAINS!
WE'VE BEEN OPENING PATHWAYS BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK THIS WHOLE TIME!
HA HA...SO, YOU SEE THE THREAD?

THE PIECES ARE NEARLY TOGETHER.
THE KNIGHT, THAT KEPT FOLLOWING US, BUT NEVER CONFRONTING US...
WAS THAT HIS GOAL ALL ALONG?!
I SUPPOSE YOU WILL HAVE TO ASK HIM YOURSELF.
I SUSPECT HE IS...CLOSE.
SEAM...THE KNIGHT WHO SPOKE TO YOU...WHAT DID HE SAY?
HA HA...IT DOESN'T MATTER. DARKNESS SURGES, LIGHT EMERGES.

WHEN OUR WORLDS TRULY COLLIDE...
...WHAT CHAOS THAT'LL BRING!
I...I'M GOING TO FIND HIM, AND CONFRONT HIM.
I HAVE TO STOP THIS!
ON YOUR WAY, THEN.
A TOAST TO YOU, MY FRIEND...
...AND TO THE END OF THE WORLD!

SCHOOL
UM...KRIS SAID...TO WAIT FOR YOU OUT HERE...

Y-YEAH! U-UMM...
I JUST...H-HERE!
WHAT'S THIS?
OH! I-IT'S...IT'S FOR YOU!
WHAT IS ALL THIS?

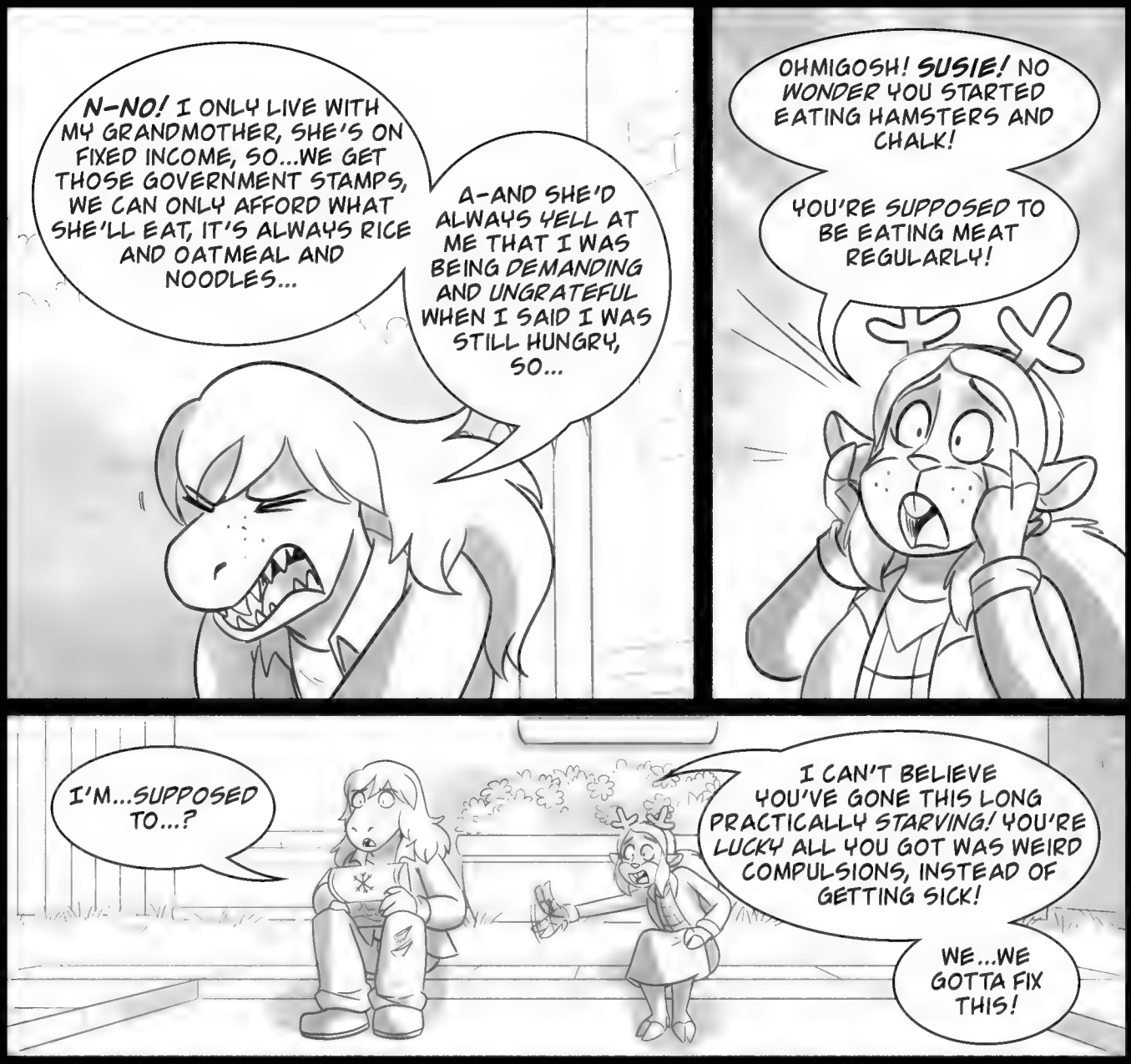
W-WELL, UH...LAST WEEK, I TALKED TO KRIS, T-THEY SAID YOU ATE CHALK,
SO I-I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT...LIKE SOME...
I D-DIDN'T GET THE CHANCE TO GIVE IT RIGHT AWAY, ALL THAT STUFF HAPPENED...
A-AND THEN, AFTER...YESTERDAY...I WAS THINKING "OH, I SHOULD DO MORE THAN THAT"...
SO I, UMM, SCRAMBLED TO FIND...SOME OTHER THINGS...
LIKE A DOG TOY? SERIOUSLY?!
T-THAT WAS AN UNSENT CHRISTMAS PRESENT...IT'S S-SUPPOSED TO FEEL GOOD FOR THEM TO CHEW ON, SO I THOUGHT...
I-I'M SORRY, IT'S STUPID, YOU CAN THROW IT OUT...
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
O-OR...YEAH...YOU CAN KEEP IT!
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW

ALSO UMM...THE TICKETS ARE...
S-SO I GOT A SUBSCRIPTION TO THOSE...ONLINE THINGS WHERE THEY SEND YOU A BOX OF SNACKS FROM AROUND THE WORLD...SO Y-YOU CAN TRY ALL KINDS OF WEIRD FOODS!
SO, UM...I-I HOPE YOU LIKE IT...
CRUNCH
NO ONE'S EVER GIVEN ME SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
I LIKE IT, BUT I...I FEEL BAD THAT I DO, ALMOST?

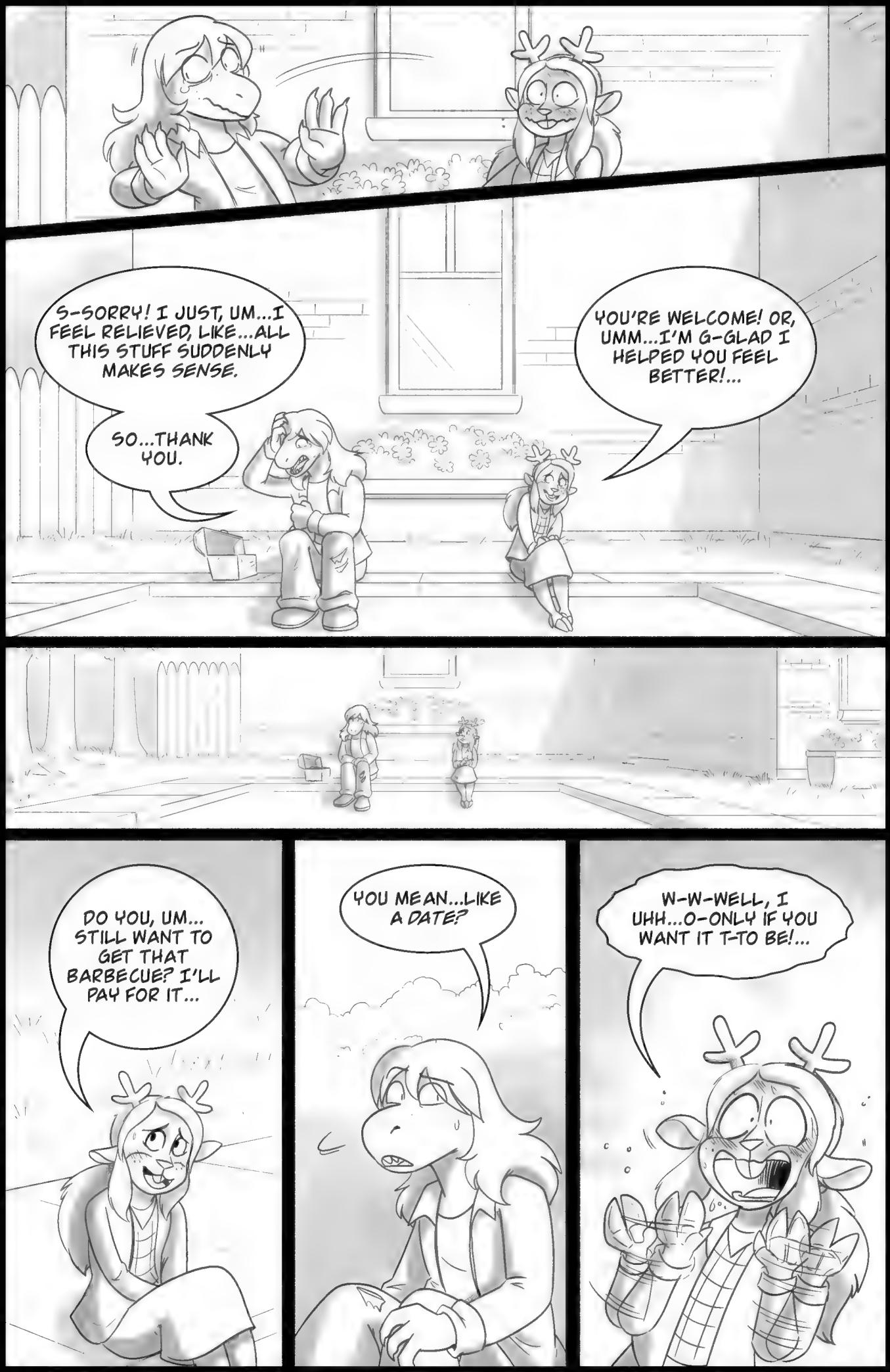
OH NO, I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL BAD ABOUT IT!
NOT BAD I GUESS. UM... GUILTY? OR...
LOOK. AFTER YESTERDAY, I...I KINDA WANNA SAY I'M SORRY.
ABOUT...THE HAMSTER, IN KINDERGARTEN.
SUSIE...YOU DON'T NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO ME ABOUT THAT.
I-I MEAN...IT WASN'T MY HAMSTER...
I KNOW, BUT...
...I REMEMBER ALL THE OTHER KIDS GOT SO UPSET, 'CAUSE IT WENT MISSING.
I REMEMBER YOU CRIED ALL DAY.
THAT'S WHEN I FIRST STARTED THINKING...
THAT I WAS A BAD PERSON.

O-OH SUSIE...I'M SO SORRY! I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK THAT!
I GUESS...WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS...WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THE TEACHER HOW YOU FELT? I'M SURE NONE OF THE ADULTS WANTED YOU TO STARVE!
I JUST...I WAS EMBARRASSED! I WAS ALWAYS ASKING THE TEACHERS FOR FOOD, AND THEY ONLY HAD THOSE ANIMAL CRACKERS TO GIVE ME...
THEY WERE PROBABLY SICK OF ME ASKING...
AND I JUST, UM...REALLY WANTED SOMETHING... ALIVE?...
OH.
I GUESS THAT MUST BE A CARNIVORE THING...
A WHAT THING?
YOU KNOW, A, UM...
I-I'M SORRY, I ALWAYS JUST ASSUMED...

NO, A WHAT THING? WHAT IS IT?
CARNIVORE?
WAIT...HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW WHAT THAT IS?
LOOK, I'M NOT SCHOOL SMART, OKAY? I DON'T REMEMBER CLASS STUFF!
SUSIE, IT'S...NOT A SCHOOL THING! THAT'S SOMETHING YOUR FAMILY SHOULD KNOW FOR YOU!
WELL I DON'T! IT'S BAD, ISN'T IT?
NO, OF COURSE NOT! IT'S JUST THE DIET YOU NEED!
IT'S LIKE...ALL HUMANS AND MOST MONSTERS ARE OMNIVORES, SO THEY'RE FINE EATING ANYTHING.
BUT, LIKE...ME AND MY FAMILY ARE ALL HERBIVORES. WE NEED TO HAVE SOME VEGETABLES EVERY DAY OR ELSE WE GET SICK!
SO, IF YOU'RE A CARNIVORE, YOU NEED MEAT EVERY DAY TO BE HEALTHY, AND...
SUSIE, AREN'T YOU...
H-HAVEN'T YOU BEEN DOING THAT?...


N-NO! I ONLY LIVE WITH MY GRANDMOTHER, SHE'S ON FIXED INCOME, SO...WE GET THOSE GOVERNMENT STAMPS, WE CAN ONLY AFFORD WHAT SHE'LL EAT, IT'S ALWAYS RICE AND OATMEAL AND NOODLES...
A-AND SHE'D ALWAYS YELL AT ME THAT I WAS BEING DEMANDING AND UNGRATEFUL WHEN I SAID I WAS STILL HUNGRY, SO...
OHMIGOSH! SUSIE! NO WONDER YOU STARTED EATING HAMSTERS AND CHALK!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE EATING MEAT REGULARLY!
I'M...SUPPOSED TO...?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE GONE THIS LONG PRACTICALLY STARVING! YOU'RE LUCKY ALL YOU GOT WAS WEIRD COMPULSIONS, INSTEAD OF GETTING SICK!
WE...WE GOTTA FIX THIS!
DEFINITELY LONG TERM...MAYBE THERE'S FOOD PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY FOR CARNIVORES? I CAN LOOK IT UP...OR I CAN ASK THE TOWN HALL ABOUT LENDING MONEY? I DUNNO...
SOMETHING IN THE SHORT TERM, TOO...W-WE COULD GET A BUS TO THE CITY! AND GO TO A STEAK HOUSE! OR...MAYBE A KOREAN BARBECUE PLACE! WHICH ONE GIVES YOU THE MOST MEAT FOR YOUR MONEY?
SNIFF
HIC
GOSH, I'D HAVE TO LOOK THAT UP TOO...MAYBE ONE OF THOSE BUFFET PLACES? I MEAN THOSE ARE ALL YOU CAN EAT, BUT PROBABLY NOT VERY GOOD...I WONDER IF THE ONE DESS AND I WENT TO IS EVEN STILL OPEN...
SNIFF
SOB
SOB
HIC

SNIFFLE
SOB
GHHH
*SOB*HIC
OH NO...I-I'M SO SORRY! DID I S-SAY SOMETHING WRONG?!
I...I THOUGHT IT WAS ME!
THAT IF I REALLY WANTED TO STOP BEING SO GROSS, AND HORRIBLE, AND SELFISH, I COULD...BUT I DIDN'T, SO I THOUGHT...
I W-WAS JUST A BAD PERSON!
SUSIE...YOU'RE NOT BAD FOR HAVING CERTAIN NEEDS! IT'S... WE'RE ALL A LITTLE TO BLAME FOR NOT MAKING SURE THEY WERE MET! I JUST WANT—
THANK YOU.
U-U-UHHH...Y...YOU...R

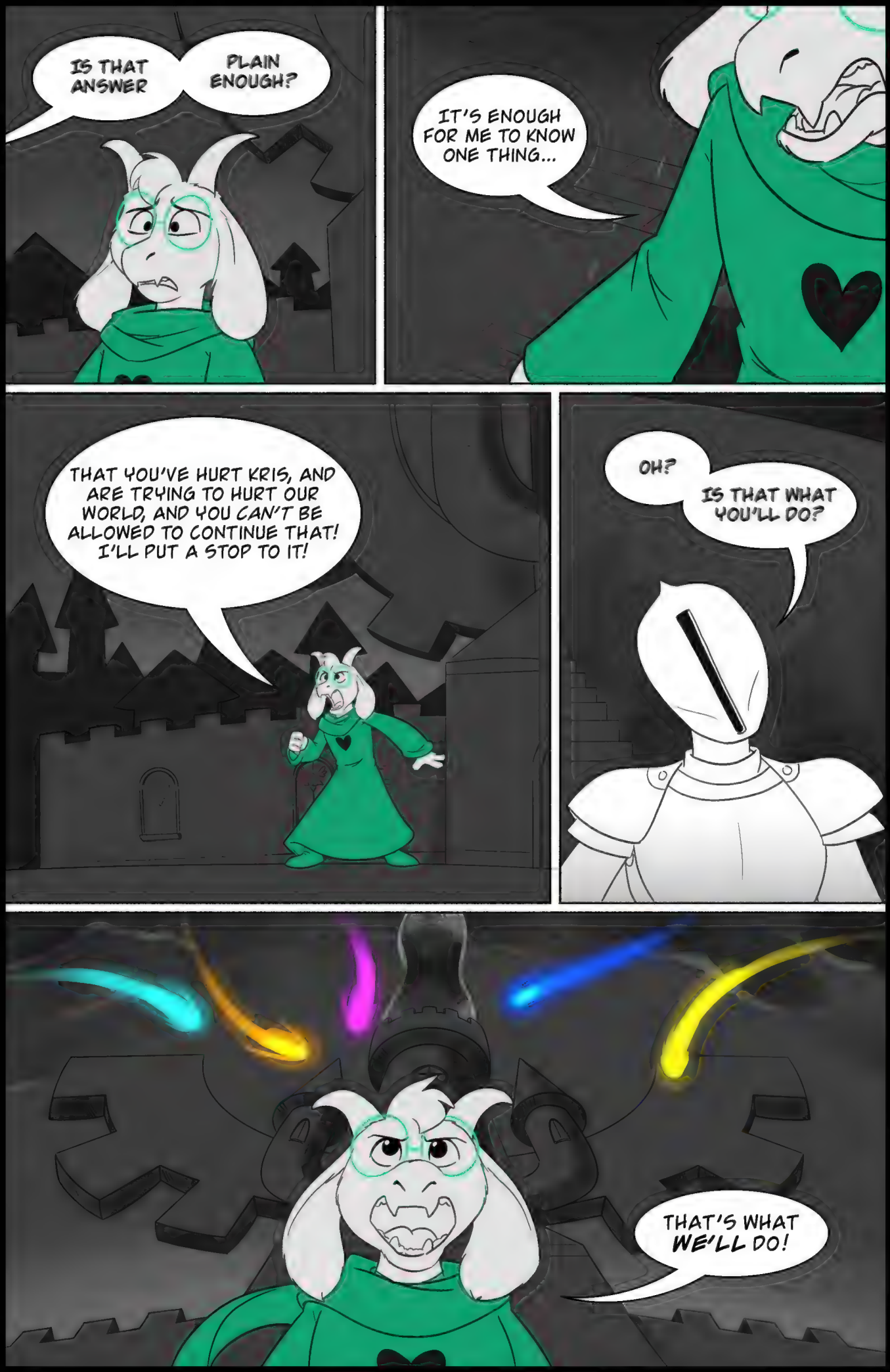

S-SORRY! I JUST, UM...I FEEL RELIEVED, LIKE...ALL THIS STUFF SUDDENLY MAKES SENSE.
SO...THANK YOU.
YOU'RE WELCOME! OR, UMM...I'M G-GLAD I HELPED YOU FEEL BETTER!...
DO YOU, UM... STILL WANT TO GET THAT BARBECUE? I'LL PAY FOR IT...
YOU MEAN...LIKE A DATE?
W-W-WELL, I UHH...O-ONLY IF YOU WANT IT T-TO BE!...

I...DON'T THINK I CAN DEAL WITH THAT YET.
RIGHT, RIGHT, UM...
...WE'LL BRING KRIS AND AZZY ALONG, TOO! IT CAN BE A FRIENDS THING. I-IT'LL BE FUN!
YEAH. BARBECUE...PIE...TRY AND FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIX A POSSESSED SOUL...
HAHA...Y-YEAH...

SUSIE, UM...DO YOU THINK...WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY?
YEAH. WE'RE...
...IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.
SCHOOL

A FOUNTAIN OF DARKNESS...

A SOURCE OF CREATION...
DREAMS TIED TO WAKING...
YOU! YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING US ACROSS ALL THESE DIFFERENT LANDS!
BUT YOU'VE NEVER REALLY SHOWN YOURSELF...NOT UNTIL KRIS ISN'T PRESENT.
WHY?
MY PRESENCE
UPSETS THEM.
IT IS BETTER TO
NOT DISTRACT THEM FROM THEIR
IMPORTANT WORK.
THEN ANSWER ME PLAINLY! ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR KRIS'S TROUBLES? FOR WHATEVER IS CONTROLLING AND UPSETTING THEM?
THEIR EXISTENCE
MAKES SUCH TROUBLES
INEVITABLE.
AND I AM RESPONSIBLE
FOR THEIR EXISTENCE.


IS THAT ANSWER
PLAIN ENOUGH?
IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME TO KNOW ONE THING...
THAT YOU'VE HURT KRIS, AND ARE TRYING TO HURT OUR WORLD, AND YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE THAT! I'LL PUT A STOP TO IT!
OH?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'LL DO?
THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO!

BOO
I DON'T WANT THERE TO BE ANY VIOLENCE, SO YOU'D BEST GIVE UP NOW!
YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED!
WONDERFUL.
WONDERFUL.
SIX OF YOU, HERE.
ABLE TO TRAVEL HERE INSTANTANEOUSLY
FROM YOUR DISTANT LANDS!
YOU WON'T THINK THIS IS SO WONDERFUL IF WE HAVE ANY SAY ABOUT IT.

POINTLESS GESTURES.
EVEN IF YOU ATTACK ME,
DEFEAT ME...
YOU ARE HERE!
I ALREADY HAVE WHAT I WANT.
WHAT...ARE YOU REALLY AFTER? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THE DARK WORLD?
THE DARK WORLD
IS THE SAME TO ME...
AS IT IS TO
YOUR OWN FRIENDS...
...A MEANS OF ESCAPE.

YOU'RE...A LIGHTNER!
A HUMAN LIGHTNER!
THAT DEFINITELY DOESN'T LINE UP WITH ANY PROPHECIES I KNOW.
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU'RE...ESCAPING THE DARK WORLD? WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH US?
AND IF YOU NEEDED HELP... WHY DIDN'T YOU ASK FOR IT?
WHO CARES? WE'RE ALL HERE, AND WE KNOW HE'S HURT KRIS...LET'S JUST TAKE HIM DOWN NOW!
I DON'T LIKE NOT KNOWING WHAT ALL THIS IS. I WANT ALL THE INFO WE CAN GET FIRST.
PLEASE, YOUNG PRINCES...
PLEASE INDULGE ME IN
MY LENGTHY EXPOSITION.
I'VE BEEN HOLDING ONTO IT FOR
SO MANY,
MANY YEARS.

TRADITIONALLY,
A SCIENTIST IS,
DESPERATE TO SHARE HIS RESULTS.
I AM SO EAGER TO
SHARE MINE.
WELL NOW I'M JUST GOING TO BE ANNOYED BY IT.
SOME OF YOU
I SUSPECT
KNOW TALES OF TERRIBLE STRIFE
BETWEEN HUMANS AND MONSTERS.
I KNOW THESE TALES,
BECAUSE I WAS THERE.
IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES.
FEAR.
VIOLENCE.

CULMINATING IN THE IMPRISONMENT
OF MYSELF
AND ALL THE OTHER HUMANS
IN THE TUNNELS AND BARRACKS
DEEP BENEATH THE TOWN.
WE EXPECTED EVENTUAL COOLING OF TENSIONS
TO BE RELEASED
IT DID NOT HAPPEN.
WE EXPECTED RESCUE.
NONE CAME.
SUCH AN UNDERGROUND WAS
BUILT TO KEEP A COMMUNITY ALIVE
FOR MANY DECADES IN THE EVENT OF
...CATASTROPHIC
GLOBAL CONFLICTS.
BUT STILL
A CRUSHING PRISON IN THE DARK
WITH DWINDLING RATIONS.

THE SLOWEST
OF DEATH SENTENCES.
I WAS THE ONLY ONE EQUIPPED
TO ENGINEER AN ESCAPE.
MY CELLMATES MAY HAVE
LOATHED ME
SHUNNED ME, FOR A...
VARIETY OF REASONS;
NOT THE LEAST BEING MY INVENTIONS
THE VERY THINGS KEEPING US
FROM ESCAPING CONVENTIONALLY.
BUT I WORKED NONETHELESS.
SPITE IS FUEL ENOUGH.

MY FIRST SUCCESS...
A CORE ENGINE TO PROVIDE ENERGY;
KEEP US ALL ALIVE.
DREADFUL NOISE,
BUT WORTHWHILE NONETHELESS.
STILL,
LIMITLESS ENERGY WAS NOT ENOUGH
ON THE WRONG SIDE OF
AN UNBREAKABLE LOCK.
I GREW OLDER.
I GREW DESPERATE.
I CYCLED THROUGH
EVERY TERRIBLE FEELING
A PERSON CAN HAVE
WHEN ALONE
IN A BOX.

BUT OUT OF THOSE MOST INTENSE
FEELINGS OF DESPERATION, THERE CAME...
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
SOMEPLACE NEW.
A PLACE SCIENCE AND REASON
COULD NOT EXPLAIN.
ONE OF IMAGINATION
AND POSSIBILITY.
OF GAMES, BROUGHT TO LIFE.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT
MERELY HALLUCINATIONS
BROUGHT ON BY OUR IMPRISONMENT.
BUT I LEFT,
AND RETURNED,
AND LEARNED

THE CREATURES HERE...
THEY FLOCKED TO ME.
LISTENED TO ME.
GAME PIECES,
HAPPY FOR ME
TO DIRECT THEM TO THEIR GOALS,
LIKE A GUIDING HAND
THIS WARRANTED
FURTHER
EXPERIMENTATION.
IN THIS PLACE
OF THE IMAGINATION
I FOUND PLACES WHERE
THE VEIL BETWEEN ITS DARKNESS
AND OUR LIGHT
WAS THIN.
A CONNECTION THAT COULD BE
HARNESSED

STOKER
PULLED FROM THE EARTH ITSELF
THERE ARE PLACES WHERE,
LIKE A PIECE IS DIRECTED
TO JUMP ACROSS THE BOARD,
OR A CARD IS PULLED
FROM A DECK,
A PERSON CAN MOVE ACROSS
GREAT SPACE
AND TIME.
PERHAPS EVEN...
MOVE THROUGH A LOCKED DOOR.
I HAD A POTENTIAL ESCAPE.
WHAT I NEEDED THEN WAS...
A GAME PIECE.

SO I MADE ONE.
SOME SCIENCE OF THE LIGHT,
SOME MAGIC OF THE DARK.
IN CERTAIN SPACES,
THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE.
IT TOOK, MANY YEARS,
MANY TRIES,
BUT I HAD A VESSEL.
NO SOUL,
NO DIRECTION...
EXCEPT WHAT THE GAME PLAYER
MAY GIVE THEM.
OF COURSE,
NOW WAS THE MOST
DIFFICULT PART.
I TRIED TO DIRECT THEM,
BUT FOUND
I COULD NOT.

I NEEDED A BEING
GREATER THAN OUR WHOLE WORLD
THE SAME WAY YOU DARKNERS
SEE THE LIGHTNERS AS GODS
DIRECTING YOU.
SURELY,
IF THIS DISTINCTION EXISTED...
IT COULD EXIST
ONE LEVEL GREATER.
THE CORE ENGINE I BUILT
AGAIN BECAME INDISPENSABLE.
I REACHED OUT,
TO PLACES, TIMES
EXISTENCES I DID NOT KNOW
OR UNDERSTAND

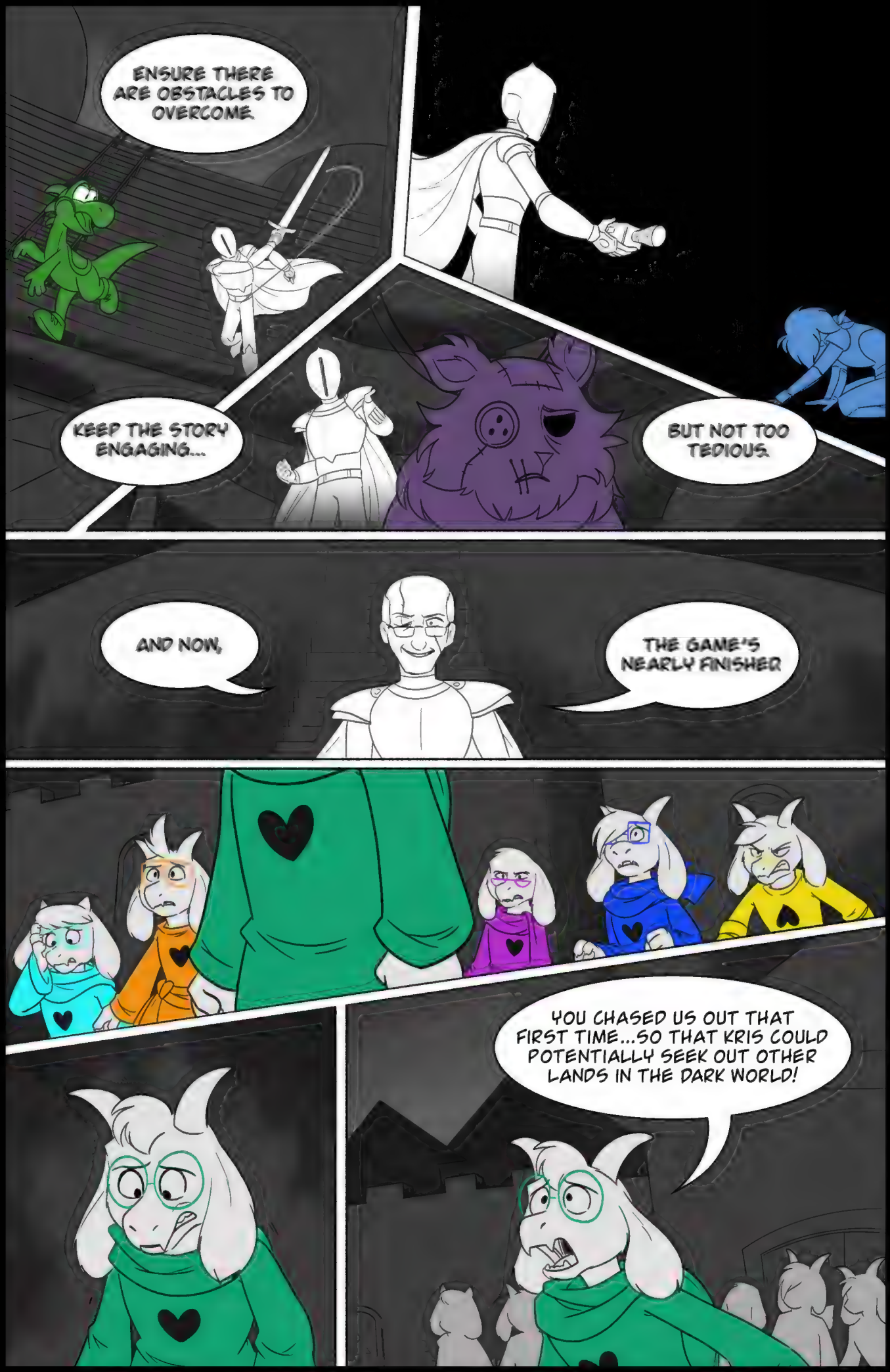
AND DO YOU KNOW
WHAT I FOUND?
GASTER
GASTER
GASTER

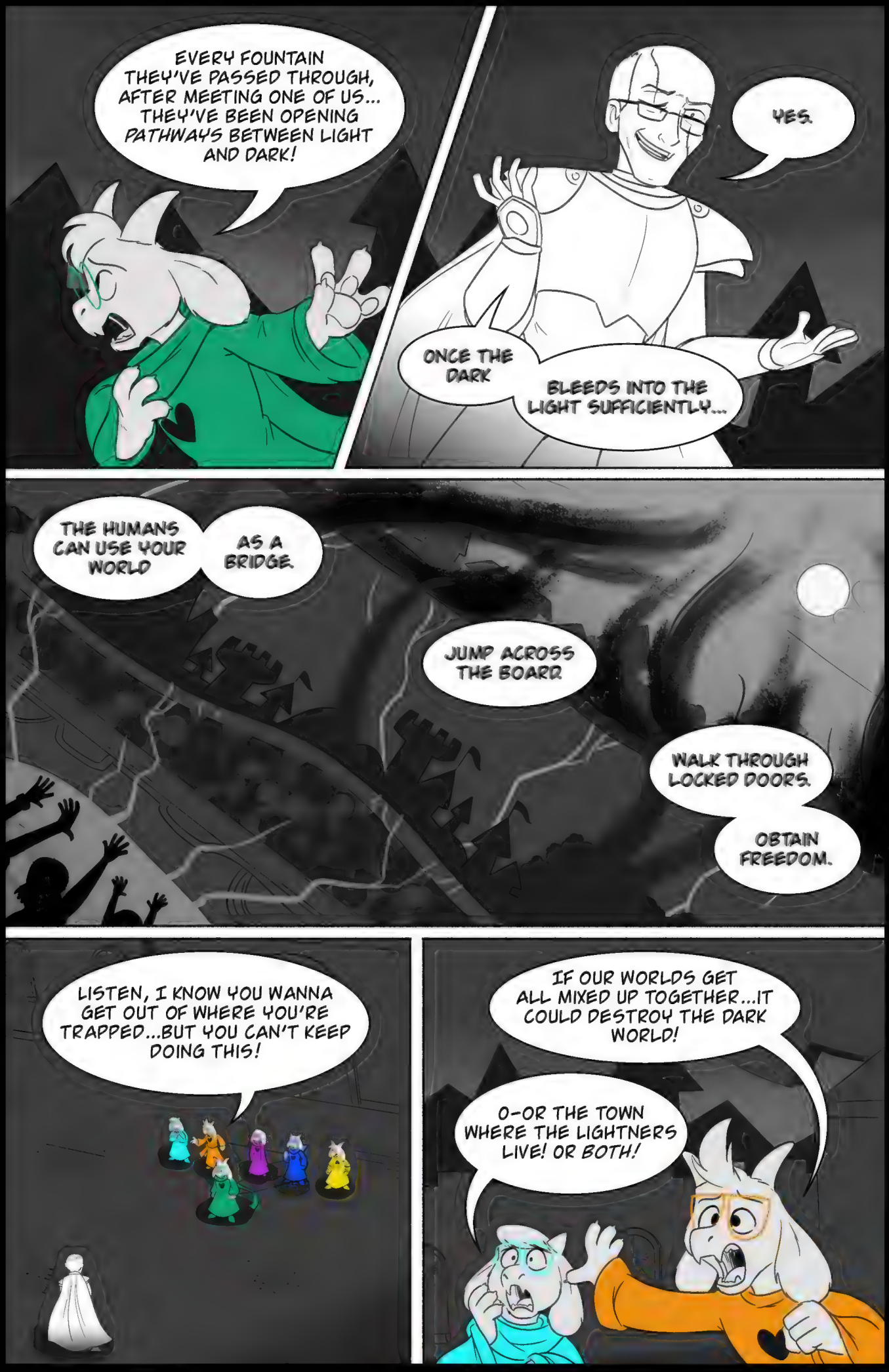
ONCE I DISCOVERED HOW
TO CONTACT THOSE ASKING FOR ME,
ALL THAT WAS NEEDED,
WAS A HOOK...
AND BAIT.
IT ALL TOOK SO NATURALLY.
THE BOARD WAS READY
TO BE SET UP,
EVEN IF THE PLAYER
WAS NOT READY TO BEGIN.
I TOOK, PERHAPS,
THE GREATEST LEAP OF FAITH
IN MY UNNATURAL LIFE.
I BLINDLY SET THE PIECE INTO THE WORLD
JUST AS I COULD NOT REACH OUT
TO SPACES UNKNOWN
WITHOUT A CONNECTION TO GUIDE ME,
THIS PIECE COULD NOT REACH
ACROSS LIGHT AND DARK
WITHOUT FORGING THOSE PATHS THEMSELVES.

IT WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE GAMBLE.
COMPLETE UNKNOWNS.
I WAS UTTERLY SHOCKED AT THE SPEED
WITH WHICH
THE FIRST CONNECTION HAPPENED

A FIRST BARRIER BETWEEN
WHAT IS AND WHAT WAS POSSIBLE,
BREACHER
THEN,
A LONG WAITING GAME
LETTING THE STORY PLAY ITSELF
WHILE I SOUGHT
AS MANY OF THOSE WEAK POINTS
BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK
AS POSSIBLE.
MOST TURNED UP NOTHING.
BUT FROM SOME...
A PUZZLE TO BE SOLVER
A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE REAL
AND THE IMAGINER

YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY.
SOWING SEEDS OF CONFLICT,
WITH NO PROMISE OF FRUITS.
TRUSTING MY WORK
WAS NOT FORGOTTEN.
AND THEN...
MY CREATION RETURNED TO THEIR BIRTHPLACE.
THE PLAYER GUIDING THEIR STEPS.
THE GAME
WAS UNDERWAY.
AFTER THAT MOMENT,
MY TASKS
WERE MUCH SIMPLER.
KEEP THE GAME FUN.

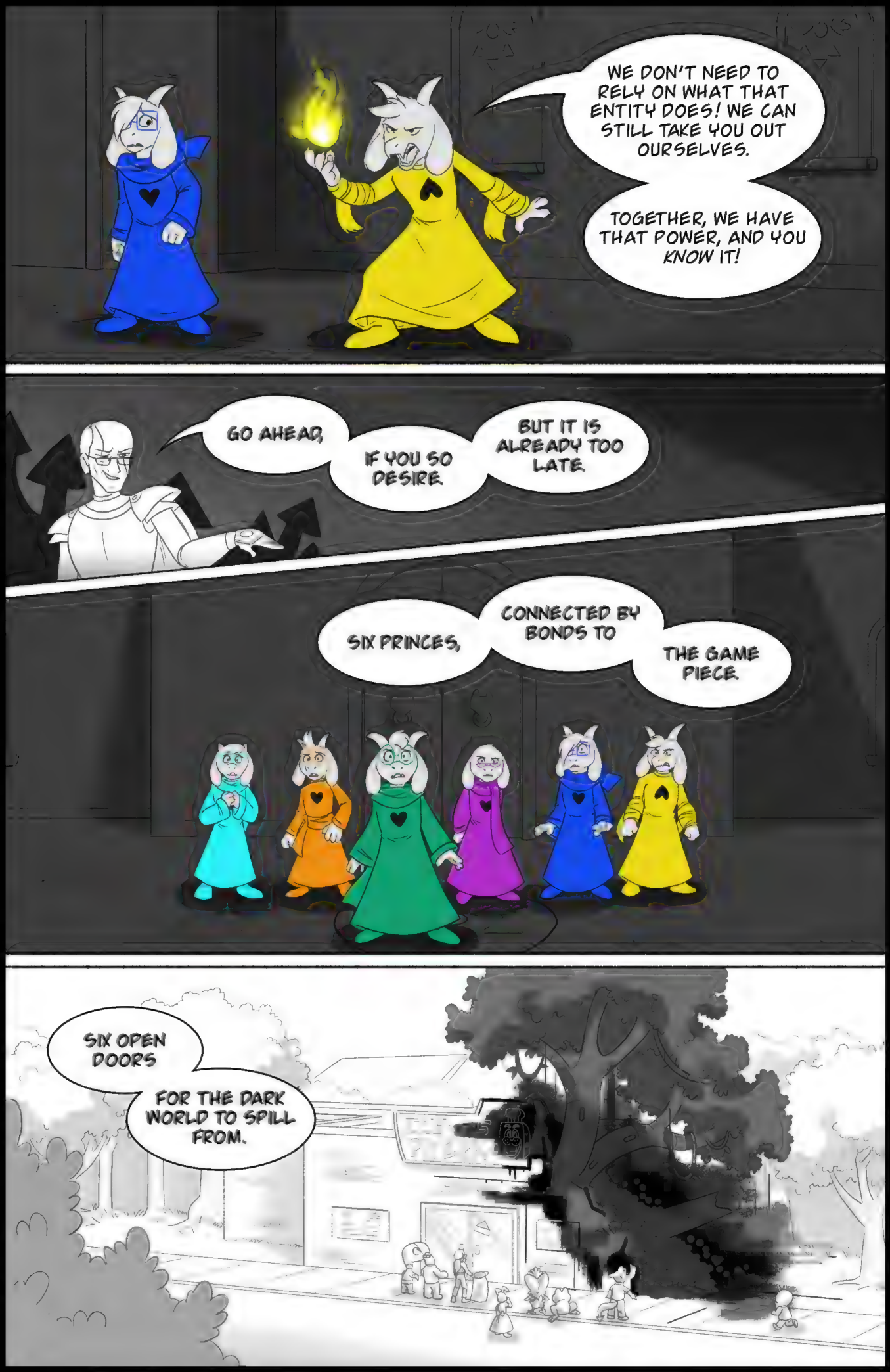

ENSURE THERE ARE OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME.
KEEP THE STORY ENGAGING...
BUT NOT TOO TEDIOUS.
AND NOW,
THE GAME'S NEARLY FINISHED
YOU CHASED US OUT THAT FIRST TIME...SO THAT KRIS COULD POTENTIALLY SEEK OUT OTHER LANDS IN THE DARK WORLD!


EVERY FOUNTAIN THEY'VE PASSED THROUGH, AFTER MEETING ONE OF US... THEY'VE BEEN OPENING PATHWAYS BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK!
YES.
ONCE THE DARK
BLEEDS INTO THE LIGHT SUFFICIENTLY...
THE HUMANS CAN USE YOUR WORLD
AS A BRIDGE.
JUMP ACROSS THE BOARD
WALK THROUGH LOCKED DOORS.
OBTAIN FREEDOM.
LISTEN, I KNOW YOU WANNA GET OUT OF WHERE YOU'RE TRAPPED...BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS!
IF OUR WORLDS GET ALL MIXED UP TOGETHER...IT COULD DESTROY THE DARK WORLD!
O-OR THE TOWN WHERE THE LIGHTNERS LIVE! OR BOTH!

EXCELLENT.
THIS GAME IS TO FREE
THOSE UNJUSTLY TRAPPED
AND IF IT ALSO PULLS
THAT WRETCHED TOWN
TO PIECES?
SO MUCH
THE BETTER.
B-BUT...ALL THOSE DARKNERS! THEY DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS, EITHER! THIS COULD HURT THEM!
OR THE HUMAN LIGHTNERS!
DOES A PERSON TRULY CARE
IF AN OLD TOY IS THROWN OUT,
OR DESTROYED?
THEY ARE OBJECTS.
MEANS OF AMUSEMENT.
NOT WORTH MOURNING.

YOU...YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT KIND OF ENTITY YOU'VE CONTACTED! THIS BEING YOU TRICKED INTO CONTROLLING KRIS...YOU DON'T KNOW THEIR HEART!
THEY MIGHT WANT TO HELP EVERYONE, NOT HURT THEM, LIKE YOU!
THEY...THEY COULD BE KIND!
THE INTENTIONS OF THE PLAYER
ARE IRRELEVANT.
KINDNESS, CRUELTY...
IT DOESN'T MATTER...
THEY DESIRE THE SAME THING
EVERY GAME PLAYER DOES.
TO FINISH THE GAME.
NARRATIVE SATISFACTION.
A HAPPY CONCLUSION.
IS THAT NOT WHY EVERY PERSON TURNS
TO THE DARKNESS OF IMAGINATION?

TO FIND THAT WHICH
DOES NOT EXIST IN REALITY?
YOU THINK THEY WILL SIMPLY STOP?
THAT THEY TRULY CARE ABOUT A TOKEN?
WHAT THIS ENTITY DESIRES
ABOVE ALL ELSE IS
TO FINISH THE STORY.
SO DESPERATE ARE THEY
FOR AN ENDING...
THEY WILL MAKE ONE UP THEMSELVES.
THAT DEPRIVED OF ONE,
SUCH A NATURE
CANNOT BE STOPPED
IT CAN ONLY BE
EXPLOITED.
NO, YOU... YOU DON'T KNOW THAT...


WE DON'T NEED TO RELY ON WHAT THAT ENTITY DOES! WE CAN STILL TAKE YOU OUT OURSELVES.
TOGETHER, WE HAVE THAT POWER, AND YOU KNOW IT!
GO AHEAD,
IF YOU SO DESIRE.
BUT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE.
SIX PRINCES,
CONNECTED BY BONDS TO
THE GAME PIECE.
SIX OPEN DOORS
FOR THE DARK WORLD TO SPILL FROM.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!
...I'M NOT GETTING DOCKED PAY FOR THIS, AM I?
THE WORLD ABOVE US IS DARKER,
DARKER
YET DARKER.
O-OH...MEW MEW? IS THAT YOU...?
KLANK
CLINK
CLINK
GROSS, FROM THE LOOKS OF IT!
OOOH, HEY, WHAT'S THIS PLACE?
HEY, YOU'RE GONNA HURT THAT LADY'S FEELINGS...

THE DARKNESS
KEEPS GROWING.
AW KRINGLES, NOT AGAIN...UHH, HEY NURSE?
THE LIGHTS ARE OUT AGAIN?
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
H-HELLO?
COUGH
IS ANYONE OUT THERE?
COUGH
CHOUGH CHOUGH HHK CHGH
THE SHADOWS
CUTTING DEEPER.
PLEASE...I-I DON'T WANT YOU... TO HURT!...

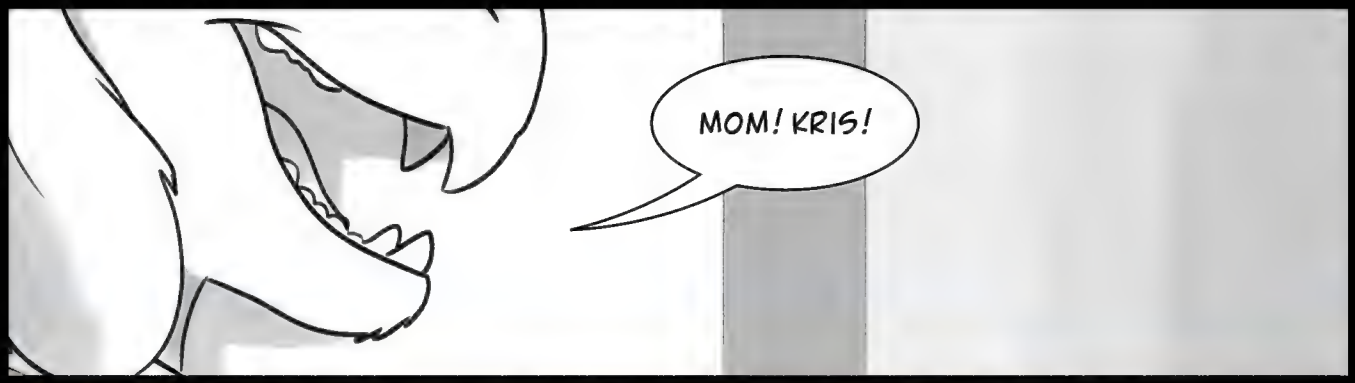
SOON THERE WILL BE
NOWHERE TO HIDE
FROM THE SHADOWS
SANS! SANS, IT'S BACK AGAIN!
IT'S BACK IN MY ROOM AGAIN!
bro, i told you, you don't gotta worry 'cause that thing isn't real--
UUHEEHEE!
NOT REAL, NOT REAL?
AND YOU, YOU...ARE YOU REAL, OR NOT REAL?
WHAT A CONCEPT, CONCEPT!
LET US FIND OUT, OUT!

NO BARRIER BETWEEN
WHAT IS AND
WHAT ISN'T.
SIX ARE HERE.
I HAVE DONE THE CALCULATIONS,
MANY TIMES OVER.
SEVEN CONNECTIONS WILL BE ENOUGH
TO COMPLETELY BREAK THE BARRIER,
AND LET THOSE HUMANS WALK
INTO THE SUN.
SEVEN THREADS
BINDING LIGHT TO DARK.
SEVEN OPENED FOUNTAINS.
AND NOW...
THERE IS JUST
ONE MORE NEEDED
ONE MORE PUZZLE TO SOLVE.
JUST ONE MORE...
OF YOU.
DEAR SECRET DIARY,

I DIDN'T THINK I WAS EVER GOING TO DO ONE OF THESE AGAIN.
BUT I GUESS I'VE GOT ONE MORE SECRET I WANTED TO GET DOWN AFTER ALL.
I'VE BEEN THINKING A WHOLE LOT THIS SEMESTER, AND I'VE LEARNED A LOT.
NOT JUST THE SCHOOL STUFF, BUT... SOME MORE IMPORTANT THINGS.
WHILE I'VE BEEN KEEPING THESE THOUGHTS SECRET, I GUESS... REALLY, KRIS, THESE THOUGHTS ARE FOR YOU.
I REALIZE NOW THAT I CAN'T KEEP RUNNING AWAY FROM THIS BIG PROBLEM FOREVER. IT'S NOT FAIR TO YOU.

WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT WAS DONE, TO THE HUMANS IN THE TOWN, AND TO YOU... IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MY FAULT.
BUT NOW IT HAS TO BE MY RESPONSIBILITY.
SO I'M NOT GOING TO RUN AWAY ANYMORE.
I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND IT'S FINE FOR YOUR SAKE.
I'M GOING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.
I'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING INCREDIBLE.
AND I THINK, I HAVE A PLAN.

IT'LL BE SCARY, BUT... WE'LL BE STRONG.
WE'LL FREE EVERYONE.
AND WE'LL DO IT TOGETHER.
RIGHT, KRIS?



THE END

The Princess and the Dragon

~~Once upon a time~~ Long ago, there was a kingdom that was always in wintertime, never spring, summer or fall. This was the fabled Snow Kingdom, and in it lived the beautiful princess ~~Arctic~~ Snowbelle. She was very kind and smart and she worked hard on all her princess duties, but her mother and father (the King and Queen) were still very strict and never let her go outside the castle ~~walls~~ grounds.

"How come I can never go outside the kingdom?" she asked all the time. "I want to see new places and meet new people!"

"We tell you all the time Princess Snowbelle, it's not safe at all in the bigger world!" said her mom, the Queen. "There's bandits who will steal all your stuff, and trolls that will smash anything they see! And worst of all, there's great big dragons out there, and all they want most is to gobble up a princess like you."

"Okay mom," said Princess Snowbelle sadly. But secretly she still really wanted to go out and maybe see these things. She'd never seen a dragon before in her life. Maybe they were not so big and scary?

Mostly she wanted to go out and see real flowers bloom. Because they lived in the Snow Kingdom, there was only just snow and ice to see, and Christmas trees and holly were what grew. Never any spring flowers like she saw in books. "I bet spring would be the prettiest thing ever to see," thought Princess Snowbelle.

One day she was out in the courtyard doing her studies, and meanwhile a few merchants were loading up a wagon to go take ~~stuff~~ goods from the Snow Kingdom to sell in another land. Princess Snowbelle saw these covered wagons and got an idea! She could sneak inside and go with them to see a bit of the outside lands, then she could follow the road back home before dinner. She snuck inside the biggest wagon (full of holly berries and wreaths) and hid while the merchants weren't looking. Then soon enough they were off and headed outside the Snow Kingdom.

Princess Snowbelle peeked just outside of the wagon as they went down the road so she could see outside. There was so much outside the castle walls! Big mossy rocks, tall pine trees and all sorts of people she'd never seen before. "This is so pretty and cool! Why were mom and dad saying the outside was so dangerous?"

Finally the wagons came to a stop by a pond because they had to give water to the horses. "I must be far enough away from the castle right now. I should jump out so I can get home in time," thought Princess Snowbelle. So I jumped out and hid behind some big trees while the merchants were getting water. They would probably tell the King and Queen if they caught her outside! So she waited until they left before she came out.

"Now I can look at the wild outside on my way back home. And maybe I can paint some of these things in my special books." Princess Snowbelle was very good at painting even from memory. She started to walk back to the castle.

But while she was walking back she ran into a problem. There were parts where the road split, and she had not been looking at the road,

so she didn't know which way to go! She tried going to the right and kept walking and walking, but nothing looked familiar. There was another split in the road, and she tried the left way, but it still wasn't looking good. "Maybe if I cut through the trees I can go back to the main road," she said, but nervously. She tried to go through the trees, but the woods just seemed to go deeper and darker. There was no sign of the road at all!

Now Princess Snowbelle was really worried. "I'm not lost, am I?" she thought ~~scarcely~~ anxiously. "Hello??" she said to the woods, but there was no answer except for hooting owls and scuttling bugs. Princess Snowbelle was normally brave, but she got scared by the sounds and kept running faster and faster.

Finally, the trees stopped and she was at a great big, frozen lake. She stopped, too tired to keep running. She had not seen this lake on the road, so she now had no clue where she was.

"I'm lost!!!" she said sadly, letting herself admit it. She was totally lost in the woods, by herself, with no clue how to get home! And at this point the sun was starting to go down, it would be dinner time soon. There was no way ~~so~~ she would get home in time now. All sorts of scary noises were coming from the woods... owls and bugs and snakes, and there was even a howling wolf! While she was usually brave, right now Princess Snowbelle didn't feel brave at all. She was lost and alone and it was very cold. She sat by the edge of the frozen lake and started to cry.

I would have listened to mom and dad! They said not to go into

the outside world and now I'm lost in it! What if there's bandits coming to get me? Or a huge smelly troll lurking nearby? Or maybe even..."
Then suddenly, a enormous shadow passed over her, blocking out the moonlight. Princess Snowbelle very slowly turned around and saw... standing behind her was a huge dragon!!!
Princess Snowbelle was too scared to move, but was also completely amazed. She had never seen a dragon before in real life. The dragon was big and covered in purple scales that shined in the moonlight. She had a long, flowing mane colored like rich soil, and a long, swishy tail. The dragon had great big wings folded down, two horns, long sharp claws, and eyes that glowed gold. Princess Snowbelle had never seen something like this before.
The dragon stared down at her with its big golden eyes. "Hey! What are you doing out here crying?"
Princess Snowbelle couldn't talk for a little bit, because she was so stuck looking into those glowing eyes. Then she remembered she was crying and tried to wipe away her tears. "I'm very sorry I bothered you, Miss Dragon! I'm crying because I'm lost, and I don't know how to get home, and..."
Then she suddenly remembered what her mom said about dragons and got worried again. "Are you going to eat me?"
The dragon looked down at her confused. "No. That's dumb. Why would I do that?"
Princess Snowbelle was relieved but also a bit confused. "I'm very sorry if I offended you. It's just that I've never seen a dragon before, and my mom the queen said dragons like to gobble up princesses..."
The dragon rolled her eyes and let out a snort. She said,

"Queens can be so stupid sometimes. No, I don't eat princesses or anyone. Except for dumb knights, and only if they attack me first."
"Oh that's good! I was really worried," said Princess Snowbelle, and let out a sigh of relief. She remembered that she should get home, although mostly she wanted to stay here and keep talking to the dragon. What if she never got to go outside again? And even though the dragon was big and scary-looking with her horns and claws, for some reason Princess Snowbelle felt safer with her nearby.
"Umm...do you know how to get to the Snow Castle from here, Miss Dragon?" she asked as politely as she could.
The dragon looked over the trees and then back at her. "I know where it is but you won't be able to get there by yourself before it's nighttime. And there's trolls around the woods too, and they're actually mean," said the dragon.

"Oh no..." Princess Snowbelle said. Maybe the dragon was nice but not everything else. "I don't know what to do..."
The dragon thought to herself for a moment. Finally she made a decision. "Okay...you can come stay with me in my cave for the night, and then you can go back to the Snow Kingdom tomorrow. But ONLY if you promise not to tell anyone where it is! My cave is a secret."
"I promise I won't tell anyone!" Princess Snowbelle promised. She was very truthful.
"Okay my cave is just over here," the dragon said. She led her into the woods and up a path to a secret cave that was hidden by a lot of trees and overhanging vines. The dragon waited for her to go inside first and then followed her in. The inside of the cave was actually really nice! There was a huge roaring fire and a big soft mossy spot that was maybe a bed, and even lots of flowers Princess Snowbelle had never seen before.
"Your cave is so beautiful, Miss Dragon! I thought dragon caves

would be very dark and scary," Princess Snowbelle said.
"It's okay for now but I'm probably not gonna stay in it long," said the dragon. "I usually go to places far away and stay awhile, then fly to a new place. I can go wherever I want."
"I wish I could do that but I've never even been outside the castle walls, and I got lost trying to find my way back..." Princess Snowbelle was sad.
"Yeah you need to get better at that before you go run away from home and stuff," the dragon said.
Princess Snowbelle sighed and wished that she could do those things. The dragon seemed so strong and ~~inter~~ ~~kinda~~ independent and Princess Snowbelle wished she could be more like her. Maybe the dragon could teach her! But what if...
"When are you going to a new Land, Miss Dragon?" asked Princess Snowbelle.
"I was going to fly far south tomorrow but I guess I'll take you back to your castle first." said the dragon.

Princess Snowbelle felt her heart sink!!! She had only just met the dragon and already she was going to go far away? What if she never got to see her again? Was this just a terrible destiny??
"Miss Dragon... ~~can I please~~ can't you please stay longer in this land?"
The dragon gave her a confused look. "Why?"
Suddenly Princess Snowbelle felt very nervous! She couldn't just say what she was <u>REALLY</u> feeling. That she liked the way the fire light made her purple scales shimmer and glow... that she seemed so big and strong and powerful... that she liked the way her tail slowly swished back and forth... and she couldn't stop looking into those bright glowing eyes like shimmery liquid gold. But she couldn't say all of that or the dragon might think she was weird or something! She tried to think of something else. Maybe there was someway her princess knowledge

could actually help?
"Ummm well I could make you something because I know how to bake deserts," said Princess Snowbelle. "Have you ever had gingerbread cookies?"
The dragon said, "No I've never had any cookies. Dragons never learn how to cook because it's too hard."
"Well maybe I can make you some and if you like them, I can make you more when I'm back home?" Princess Snowbelle asked.
"Ehh okay whatever." The dragon replied. She didn't seem that interested. But Princess Snowbelle was determined, now she just had to bake the best cookies ever! She immediately got to work making the cookies, which was pretty hard because the dragon didn't have any normal kitchen ~~stuff~~ utensils. But she was very smart and found things she could use instead of regular eggs or sugar. She put all her skills at baking to the test, and even shaped the gingerbread cookies into little dragon shapes, and then cooked them with the big fire. Finally she had a tray of fresh gingerbread cookies and she brought them up to the dragon. This was the most nervous she'd ever been making deserts!

"Here... you can try one and see if you like it" she started to say, but then suddenly, the dragon took up the tray and ate all of the cookies in a single gulp. Princess Snowbelle didn't know what to do, and then she saw ... the dragon's golden eyes get brighter and brighter, like she was lighting up on the inside. And were those new flowers suddenly growing where she was sitting?
"These are <u>really</u> good..." the dragon said, licking her lips. "I've never

had those before..."
Princess Snowbelle was so excited! So maybe the dragon would stay after all?
"They're even better with frosting, and I can make them for you back at home!" she said trying to sound normal, but it was hard to contain her happiness.
The dragon looked happy for a moment too, but then went back to a more stern expression. ~~She~~ Snowbelle worried... what was she missing?
"Hey... thanks for the cookies," the dragon said, but she seemed thoughtful.
"We should probably go to sleep so we can fly back in the morning though."
"Okay..." Princess Snowbelle was tired, but she also didn't want to sleep yet. She looked around the cave. "Where should I..."
"You can sleep by the fire and I'll be over here" the dragon said before Princess Snowbelle could even ask.
There was a large moss bed close to the fire that was way too big for her. She sat down in it and it was very warm, and covered in beautiful flowers. She looked over and saw the dragon curl up in a corner, and she looked very lonely. Princess Snowbelle didn't want her to be sad and alone!!

"Miss Dragon..."
"What? Aren't you tired?" the dragon said loudly.
"Yes, but I don't want to take your bed..." Princess Snowbelle said softly.
The dragon was quiet for a minute, and Princess Snowbelle didn't know what to think before the dragon asked "Why are you being so nice to me?"
Princess Snowbelle was so confused. It was the dragon who was being the nice one! "But YOU are nice! You rescued me from the outside and are letting me stay in your cave and promised to fly me home tomorrow! I should be polite, it's what a princess should do."
The dragon suddenly looked very sad! "No, princesses usually

scream and run away from me, because they think I'll eat them. Knights come and attack me for that reason, too. People hate me because I have to sometimes take their sheep for my food. They think I'll burn down their houses. The truth is, I move around all the time because people hate dragons and I don't want to be around them.

All this made Princess Snowbelle so sad! She had been so amazed to meet the dragon that she didn't even think of how she must feel! All her life she had heard how horrible dragons were, and how she realized the dragon had, too!

Tears welled up in Princess Snowbelle's eyes at the thought of it! "I'm... so... sorry... I didn't want to hurt your feelings Miss Dragon... I think you're very nice, and..." and she wanted to say she thought she was beautiful, but she was still scared to say it. "And you should have your own bed because this is your home." She dried her eyes and stood up ~~defi~~ ~~[illegible]~~ proudly.

The dragon looked so surprised, like she wanted to be sarcastic but couldn't because Princess Snowbelle was so sincere. She finally came over and laid back down on her mossy bed.

Princess Snowbelle was satisfied with this, but then the dragon patted the spot beside her. "Here. You're really small so you need to stay warm."

Princess Snowbelle was frozen for a moment with amazement. The dragon was letting her stay that close to her! She thought she might die from blushing so much, but she slooooowly walked back over and sat down on the soft moss beside the dragon.

"Thank you for being a nice princess. Go to sleep," said the dragon, and curled up around her.

All the nicest, softest pillows on her royal bed back home weren't as nice as this. The dragon was so big around her, but her purple scales were so soft and warm. She was surrounded by terrifying sharp claws and spikes, but she felt ~~safe~~ completely safe. The dragons huge wings were folded over them like a tent. What a magnificent creature! Princess Snowbelle wanted to stay awake so that she could have that feeling forever, but she was so comfortable that she fell asleep right away.

* ✿ * ✿ *

The next morning Princess Snowbelle almost forgot she wasn't really at home. The bed was soft and there was a fire glowing nearby... what if meeting the dragon was just a nice dream? But then she opened her eyes, and she saw two huge golden eyes staring down at her.

"Hey wake up sleepyhead, we need to get you back home already!"

It wasn't a dream after all! It had all really happened! Princess Snowbelle stood up quickly, with some flowers sticking to her dress and hair. "Miss Dragon, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to oversleep! I was just so comfortable and—"

The dragon actually smiled a bit at her, letting her see some of those sharp teeth. "I bet all princesses sleep in too much," she said. She leaned her head down close to Princess Snowbelle. "But I don't want any dumb knights to come bother me, so let's get you home where you belong."

Princess Snowbelle was very nervous at first, not sure what to do, before she realized the dragon wanted her to ride on her back. She'd only ridden on very slow horses before, and this was completely

different! She didnt want to be rude though, so she swallowed down her worries and carefully climbed up onto her back, but still in front of her wings. The dragon's long mane flowed down her back, so Princess Snowbelle held onto it, hoping that she wasnt grabbing too hard.

"Hold on tight!!!" said the dragon.

The dragon walked out of her cave and spread her huge wings, and then — WOOOOSH!!! They took off at super fast speed, making Princess Snowbelle hang on for dear life!! Before she knew it she was up super high in the air, with the dragon beating its big wings around her, and her mane flowing in the wind. At first, Princess Snowbelle was too scared too look, but she finally did, and saw the landscape of the snow kingdom. It was so beautiful from high up! She never could have imagined this!

"You doing okay?" The dragon called back to her, and Princess Snowbelle finally gave a slow nod.

"I've never been up this high, its so amazing!" She said really loudly, over the rushing wind.

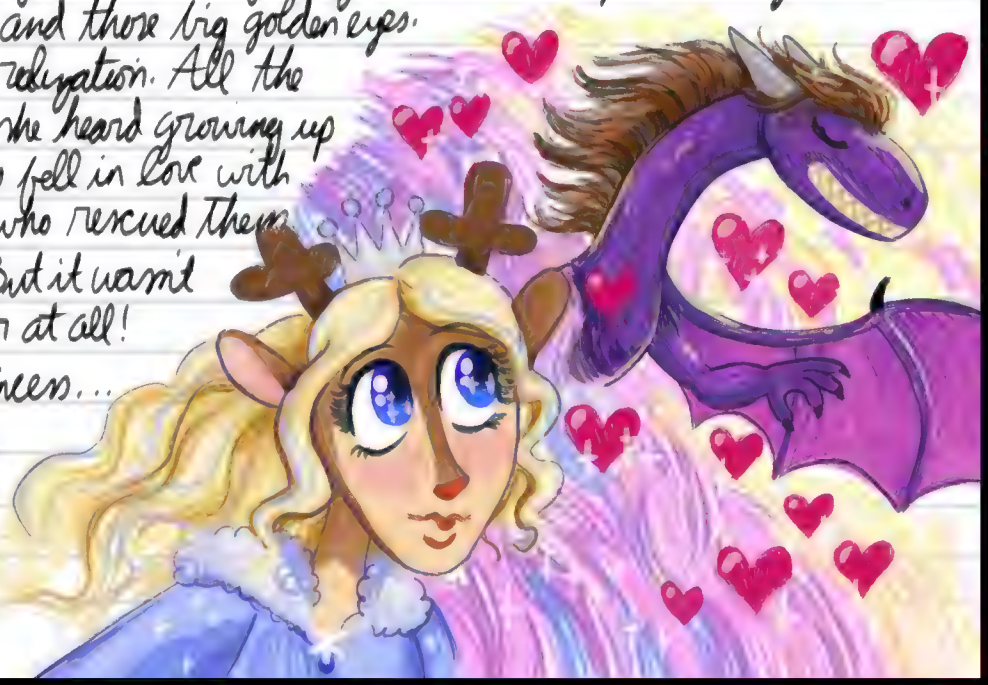
"Lots of snow and ice here," the dragon said. Princess Snowbelle remembered her original reason for running away in the first place.

"It's always winter in the snow kingdom" she said with a sigh. "It's nice and all, but it's all I ever get to see! I wish I could see a land in spring... covered in beautiful flowers!"

The dragon suddenly got a ~~mischie~~ mischevous glint in her eyes. "I can show you a land in beautiful flowers..." she said mysteriously.

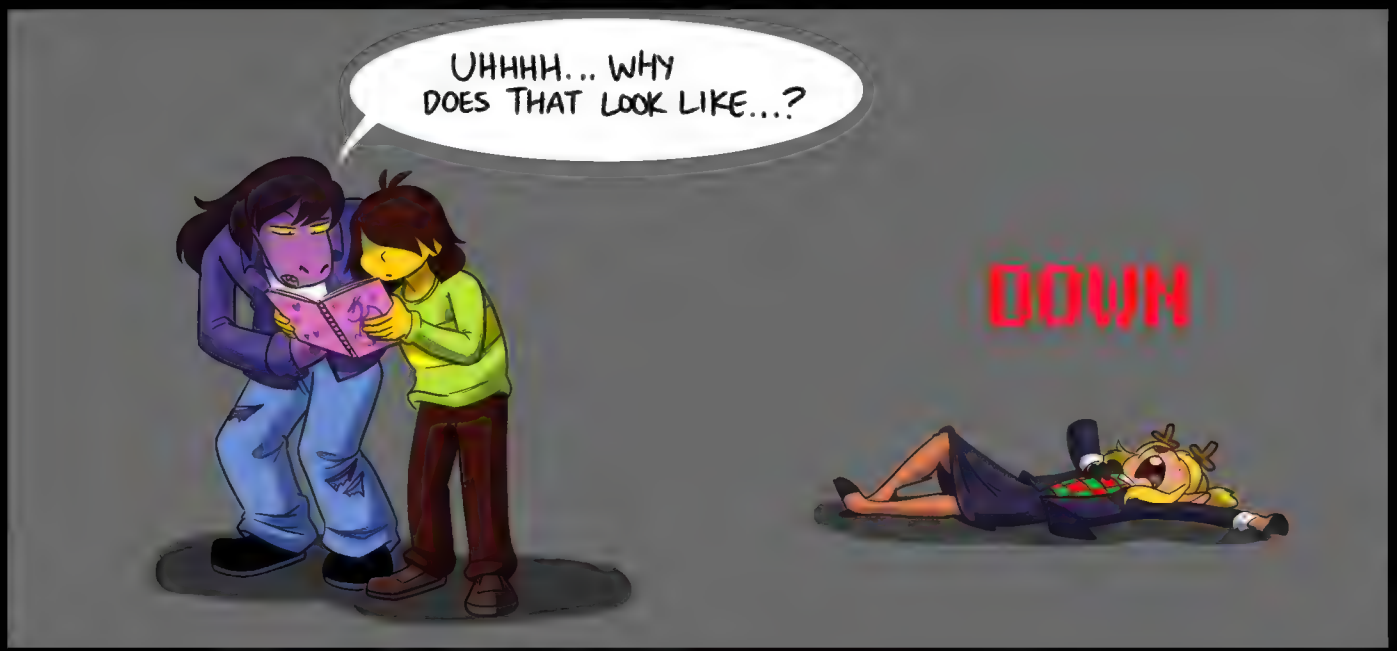
"Really? Where??" asked Princess Snowbelle.
"Watch this! said the dragon, and Princess Snowbelle had to hold on tight as the dragon dove towards earth! The dragon took a deep breath, like she was going to blow fire... but instead what came out was a strong warm air. Her breath didn't burn things like everyone said dragon breath did, but it melted away all the ice and snow on the ground and trees. As the snow melted, bright green grass and a rainbow of colorful flowers sprouted out of the ground! They spread across the land everywhere the dragon flew! The air was full of flower petals and the smells of spring! Princess Snowbelle was completely amazed at it all!
"This is the most beautiful thing I've seen in my whole life!" Princess Snowbelle exclaimed. "It's magic!"
"Some dragons from the summer breath fire, but that's not me. I'm a dragon of spring," said the dragon. They continued across the fields to the castle, with a trail of spring flowers blooming behind them. Princess Snowbelle had never been so happy! She could see some kingdom people and guards pointing and yelling at them as they got closer to the castle, but she didn't care. She would make them understand later. She didn't want this ride to end!
Finally, the dragon got to the castle itself, and went in a big circle around it until they found the tower that had her bedroom. The dragon carefully landed on the roof by the balcony and leaned her head down so that Princess Snowbelle could get off. "There we go, I said I could get you home really fast."
Princess Snowbelle slowly slid off the dragon's back reluctantly. She had been so excited to go home, but now she was sad. Was this really goodbye for them?! "Miss Dragon... you've been so nice, and I wanted to say

thank you for everything, and I..." She hesitated. She thought she might cry! And it looked like the dragon could tell!
"Hey, why are you looking like you might cry again?" She asked.
"Because, I know you have to go, and I... I will miss you so much!!" Princess Snowbelle said.
The dragon looked a little thoughtful. "Welllll... maybe I CAN stay around this land a little longer..."
Princess Snowbelle got excited again! Maybe her dream could come true!
"Really? You'll stay??"
"Just because I want to have more of those cookies that you made!" The dragon said, but then added, "and also to talk a little more..."
"Yes! Of course I will make plenty more for you, Miss Dragon! I would love to!"
"Okay, then I'll be back here tomorrow," the dragon said. She spread her wings out and took off from the tower with a mighty gust of wind! As she did, all the ice and snow that was left on the balcony melted away, and beautiful flowers started to bloom.
Princess Snowbelle leaned against the balcony railing covered in flowers and happily sighed. She knew her mother and father would be running to her, but she could barely even think about that. All she could think about was the dragon's beautiful scales and flowing mane, her deep resonating voice, her claws and horns, and those big golden eyes.
She had a huge realization. All the tales and stories she heard growing up were that princes fell in love with the brave knight who rescued them from a dragon. But it wasn't like that for her at all!
She was a princess...
in love with
a dragon!!!!



HEY NOELLE, FOUND YOUR NOTEBOOK HERE.
UHHHH....W-W-WAIT...

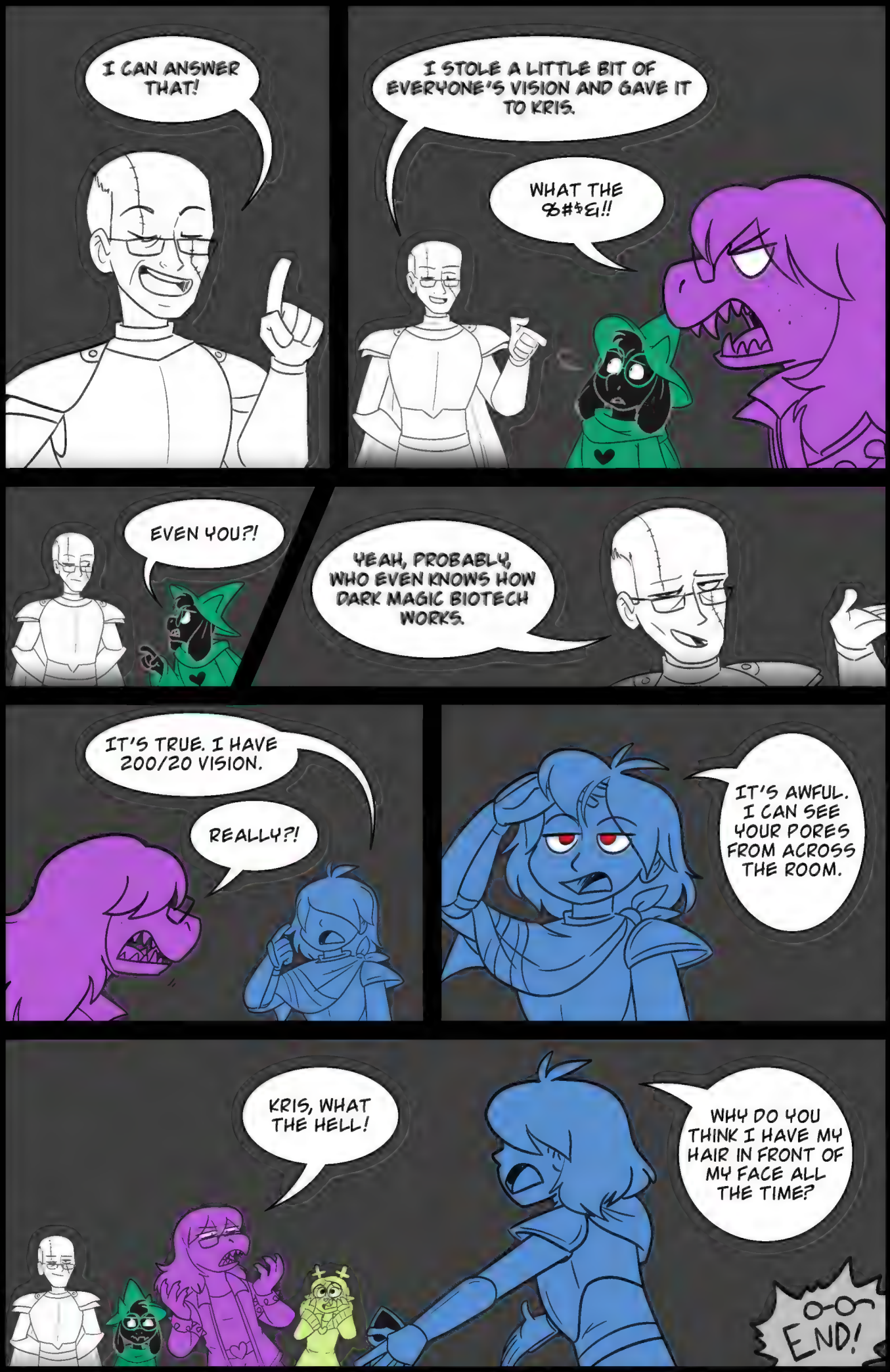
WOAH, YOU DRAW REALLY GOOD.
-50


UHHHH... WHY DOES THAT LOOK LIKE...?
DOWN

Silly Side Comics

MAN, SO MANY OF YOU NERDS HAVE GOT GLASSES HERE.
...
RALSEI AND ALL THE OTHER TOOTHPASTE BOYS HAVE THEM...
...WHICH MEANS AZZY DOES, TOO...
...MS. ALPHYS AND MS. TORIEL BOTH WEAR GLASSES...
...BERDLY DOES, TOO...

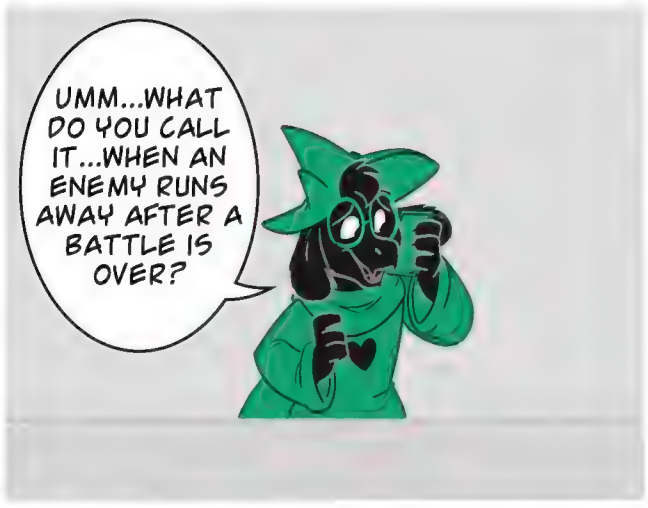
ME TOO!
WAIT, WHAT?
YOU SILLY SWEET CORN MUFFIN!
MY SPADE...
...IS...
...A GLASSES!
WELL, AT LEAST WE DON'T—
—WHAT THE HELL
AHHHHHH!!
WHY'S EVERYONE SO NEARSIGHTED HERE?
NOOO, MOM SAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN IF I PLAYED TOO MANY VIDEO GAMES!
?


I CAN ANSWER THAT!
I STOLE A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYONE'S VISION AND GAVE IT TO KRIS.
WHAT THE %#$&!!
EVEN YOU?!
YEAH, PROBABLY, WHO EVEN KNOWS HOW DARK MAGIC BIOTECH WORKS.
IT'S TRUE. I HAVE 200/20 VISION.
REALLY?!
IT'S AWFUL. I CAN SEE YOUR PORES FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.
KRIS, WHAT THE HELL!
WHY DO YOU THINK I HAVE MY HAIR IN FRONT OF MY FACE ALL THE TIME?
END!

EXCUSE ME...I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION.
ARE YOU RUNNING FOR MAYOR AGAIN?
KRIS?
ARE YOU RUNNING?
KRIS DREEMURR, I KNOW IT'S YOU.
STOP PRANK CALLING MY OFFICE.
FINE, I'LL GET SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT.
WAIT WHAT—
HEY, CAN I TALK TO HUGH MANPUPE?
THERE'S NO HUGH MANPUPE HERE...

GOOD, THEY SHOULD AT LEAST BE USING THE TOILET!!
HA
HA HA
HA
HA
HA HA
HA HA

• • •


UMM...WHAT DO YOU CALL IT...WHEN AN ENEMY RUNS AWAY AFTER A BATTLE IS OVER?

ASRIEL...?

NO, YOU CALL IT A LATE FLEE!
OKAY, GOODBYE!

• • •

HOHOHOHO! I DEMAND TO SPEAK TO YOUR LEADER!

I'M THE MAYOR. I'M IN CHARGE.

REALLY? WOW, THAT WAS EASY!
I WIN THIS PRANK, YOU LITTLE SOURDOUGH!
NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE
EXCUSE ME, IS THIS TREE IN THE LOBBY YOURS?
YES? ...AND IS THIS ASRIEL AGAIN?
WELL, CAN YOU TELL IT TO LEAF ME ALONE?

UMMM OKAY BYE.
BEEP
CONIFERS DON'T EVEN HAVE LEAVES.
HELLO, I'D LIKE TO ORDER A LARGE PIZZA!
THIS ISN'T A PIZZA PLACE.
REALLY? THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL THAT GOVERNMENT CHEESE?
WE DON'T HAVE THAT.
EXCUSE ME, CAN I HAVE A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME?
YES?

THANKS, I NEED A NEW ONE AFTER I WASTED ONE DOING THIS PRANK CALL.
AND WHOSE FAULT IS THAT...?
UHHH HELLO...UM —IS AMANDA SMOOCH STILL W-WORKING THERE?
I HEARD THIS ONE AGES AGO.
YOU'RE RIGHT, NEVER MIND THIS WAS MEAN—SORRY BYE!!
BEEP
?
HELLO?

HELLOOO?...

ONE DAY, EVERYTHING YOU KNOW AND LOVE WILL BE GONE FOREVER.

IS THAT A THREAT?

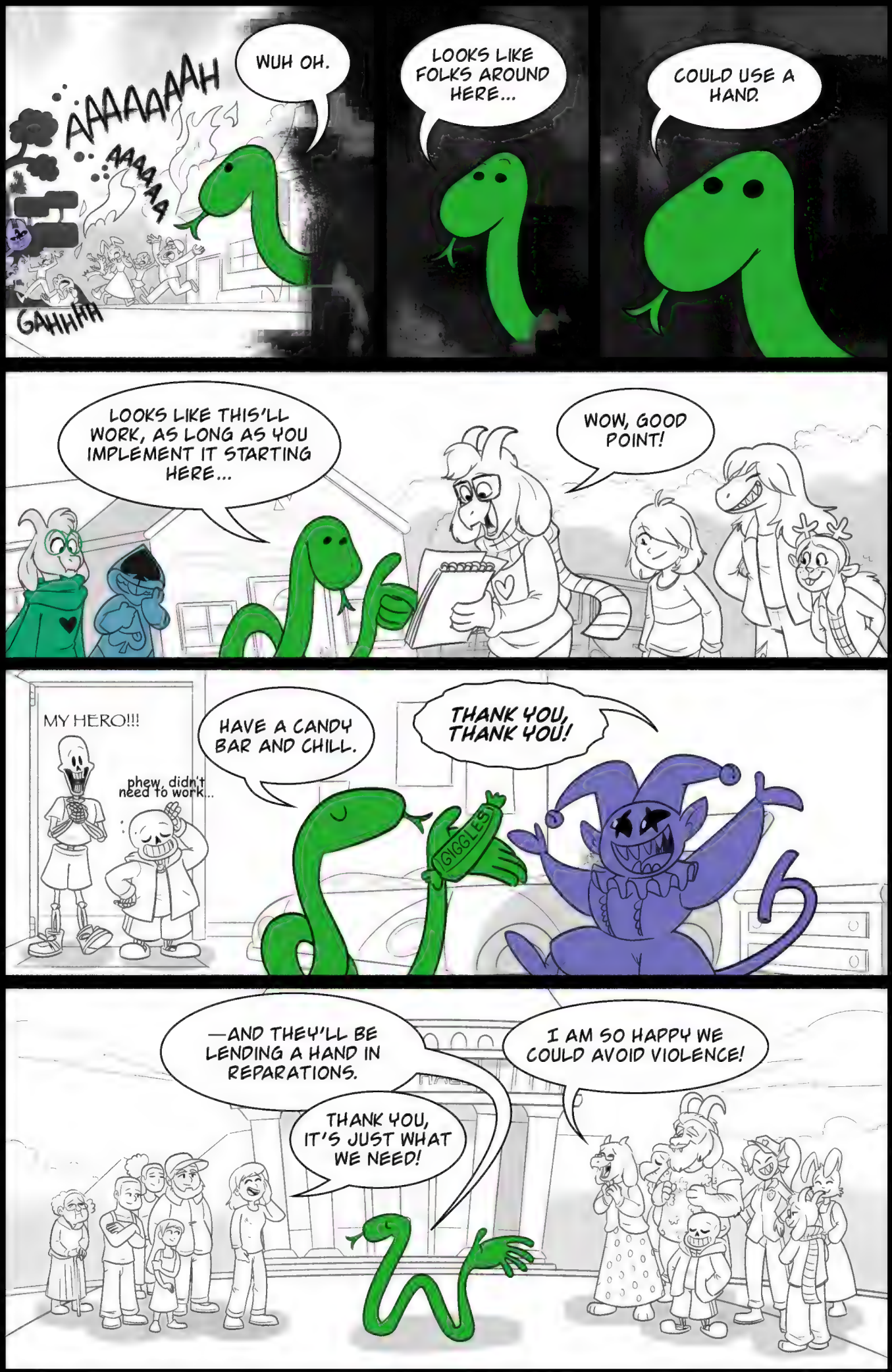
NO, IT'S A JOKE.
IT'S VERY FUNNY.

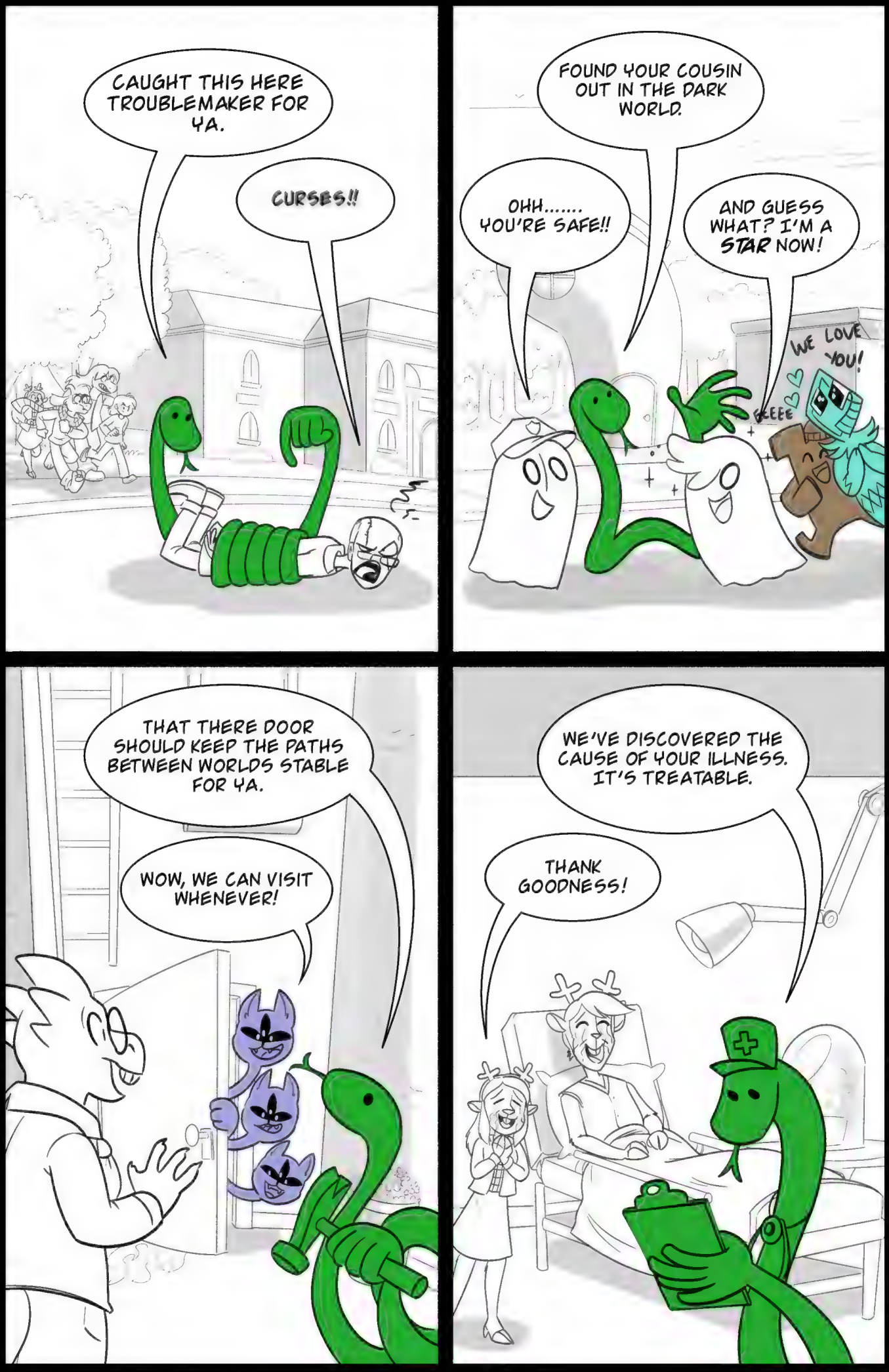
. . .

hey, just calling to ask: is your fridge running?

YES, IT'S RUNNING.
I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ME TO GO CATCH IT?

nah. gotta say though, it's got my vote.
• • •
MAYOR HOLIDAY! I JUST WANTED TO CALL AND APOLOGIZE FOR ALL THOSE PRANK CALLS YOU WERE GETTING.
FINALLY, SOMEONE NORMAL...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, ASRIEL.
GREAT. WHILE I'VE GOT YOU, I WANTED TO ASK...ARE YOU RUNNING FOR MAYOR AGAIN?
YES, OF COURSE.
WOW, I WOULD'VE THOUGHT IT'D BE FASTER TO DRIVE!
HIGH-FIVE!
BEEP
END!

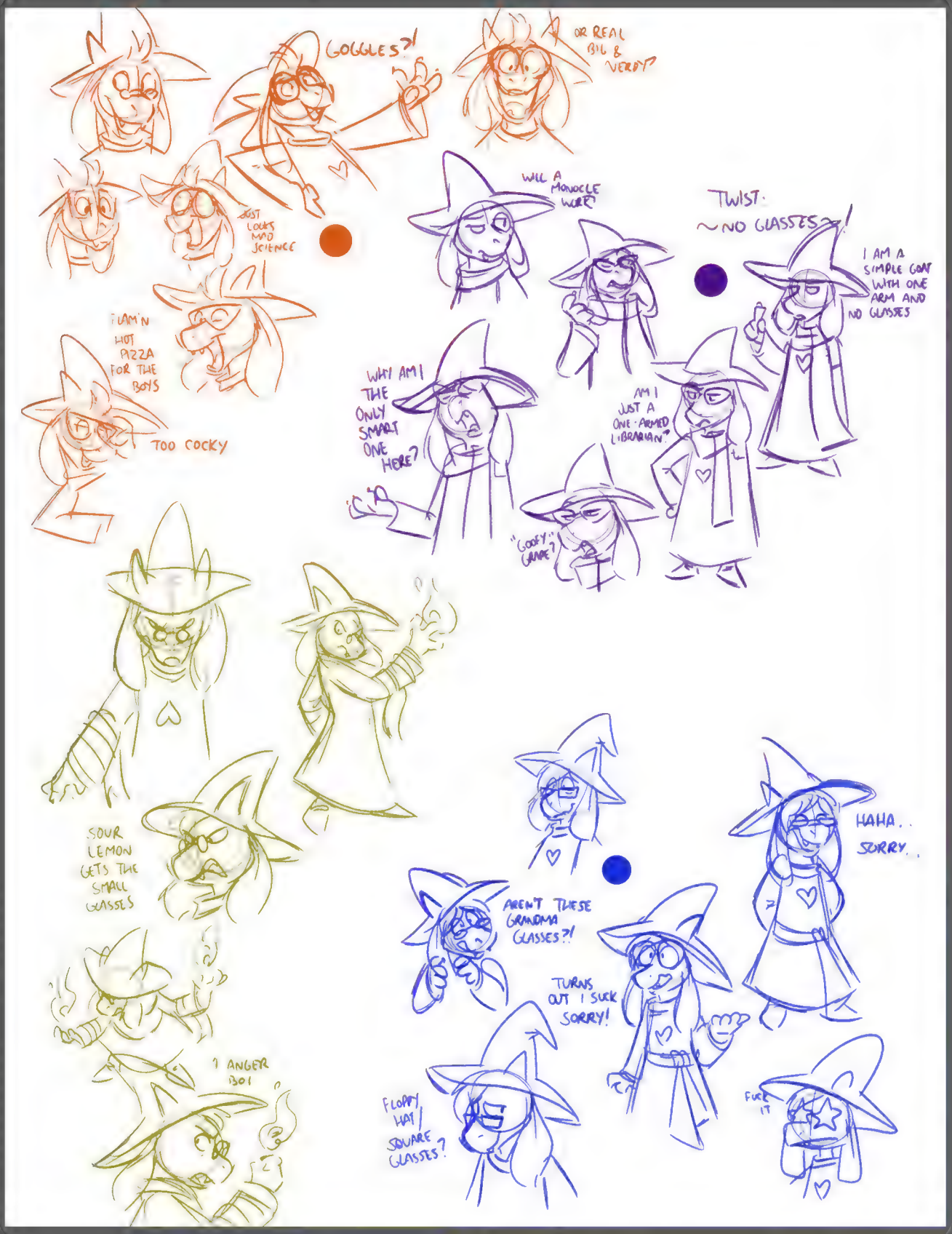

AAAAAAAH
AAAAAA
GAHHHH
WUH OH.
LOOKS LIKE FOLKS AROUND HERE...
COULD USE A HAND.
LOOKS LIKE THIS'LL WORK, AS LONG AS YOU IMPLEMENT IT STARTING HERE...
WOW, GOOD POINT!
MY HERO!!!
phew, didn't need to work...
HAVE A CANDY BAR AND CHILL.
THANK YOU, THANK YOU!
GIGGLES
—AND THEY'LL BE LENDING A HAND IN REPARATIONS.
THANK YOU, IT'S JUST WHAT WE NEED!
I AM SO HAPPY WE COULD AVOID VIOLENCE!


CAUGHT THIS HERE TROUBLEMAKER FOR YA.
CURSES!!
FOUND YOUR COUSIN OUT IN THE DARK WORLD.
OHH..... YOU'RE SAFE!!
AND GUESS WHAT? I'M A STAR NOW!
WE LOVE YOU!
SKEEE
THAT THERE DOOR SHOULD KEEP THE PATHS BETWEEN WORLDS STABLE FOR YA.
WOW, WE CAN VISIT WHENEVER!
WE'VE DISCOVERED THE CAUSE OF YOUR ILLNESS. IT'S TREATABLE.
THANK GOODNESS!

YOU ARE UNBANNED FROM FREE HAM SANDWICH DAY.
PRINCE LANCER CAN COME, TOO.
FUCK YEAH!!!
AND IN A STUNNING UPSET, THE NEW MAYOR VOTED INTO OFFICE IS... HANDY SNAKE!
RACE
THANK GOD...
HANDY SNAKE, YOU MANAGED TO SAVE OUR TOWN, BOTH THE DARK AND LIGHT WORLDS, AND EVEN SAVED MY MARRIAGE! HOW DO YOU DO IT?
OH, YOU KNOW...
I'M JUST...
A REAL HANDY GUY TO HAVE AROUND.
END!

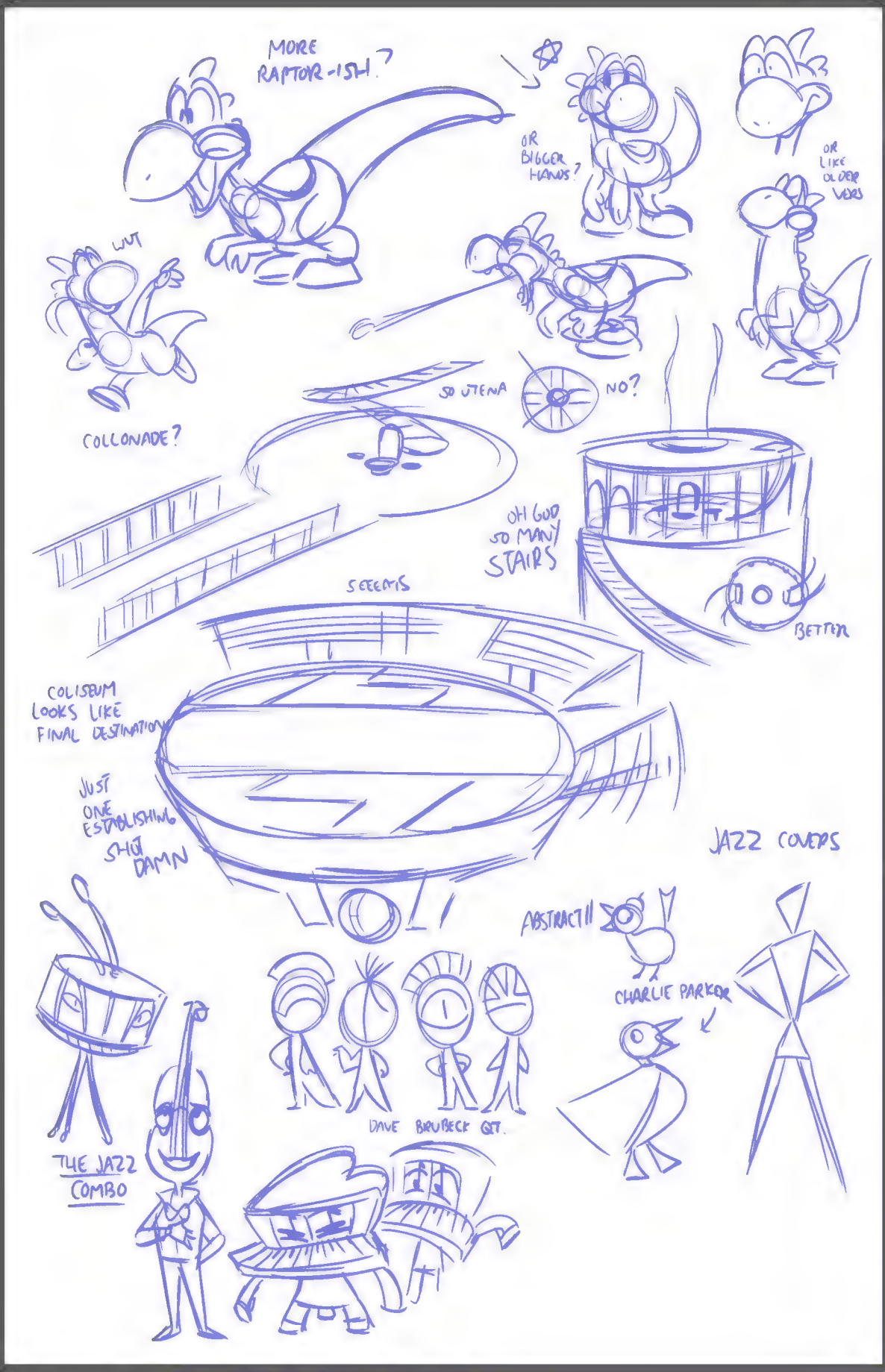
Behind the Scenes

My very first page of sketches when trying to do the ideas for Paper Trail! At the time, it was just trying to get down all the various ideas I had for the story! Some stuff showed up, while some things changed or got dropped. There's even a little proto Gaster Knight in there!


GOGGLES?!
OR REAL BIG & VERRY?
JUST LOOKS MAD SCIENCE
FLAM'N HOT PIZZA FOR THE BOYS
TOO COCKY
WILL A MONOCLE WORK?
TWIST: ~NO GLASSES?!
I AM A SIMPLE GOAT WITH ONE ARM AND NO GLASSES
WHY AM I THE ONLY SMART ONE HERE?
AM I JUST A ONE-ARMED LIBRARIAN?
"GOOEY" GRAPE?
SOUR LEMON GETS THE SMALL GLASSES
1 ANGER BOI
HAHA.. SORRY..
AREN'T THESE GRANDMA GLASSES?!
TURNS OUT I SUCK SORRY!
FLOPPY HAT/ SQUARE GLASSES?
FUCK IT

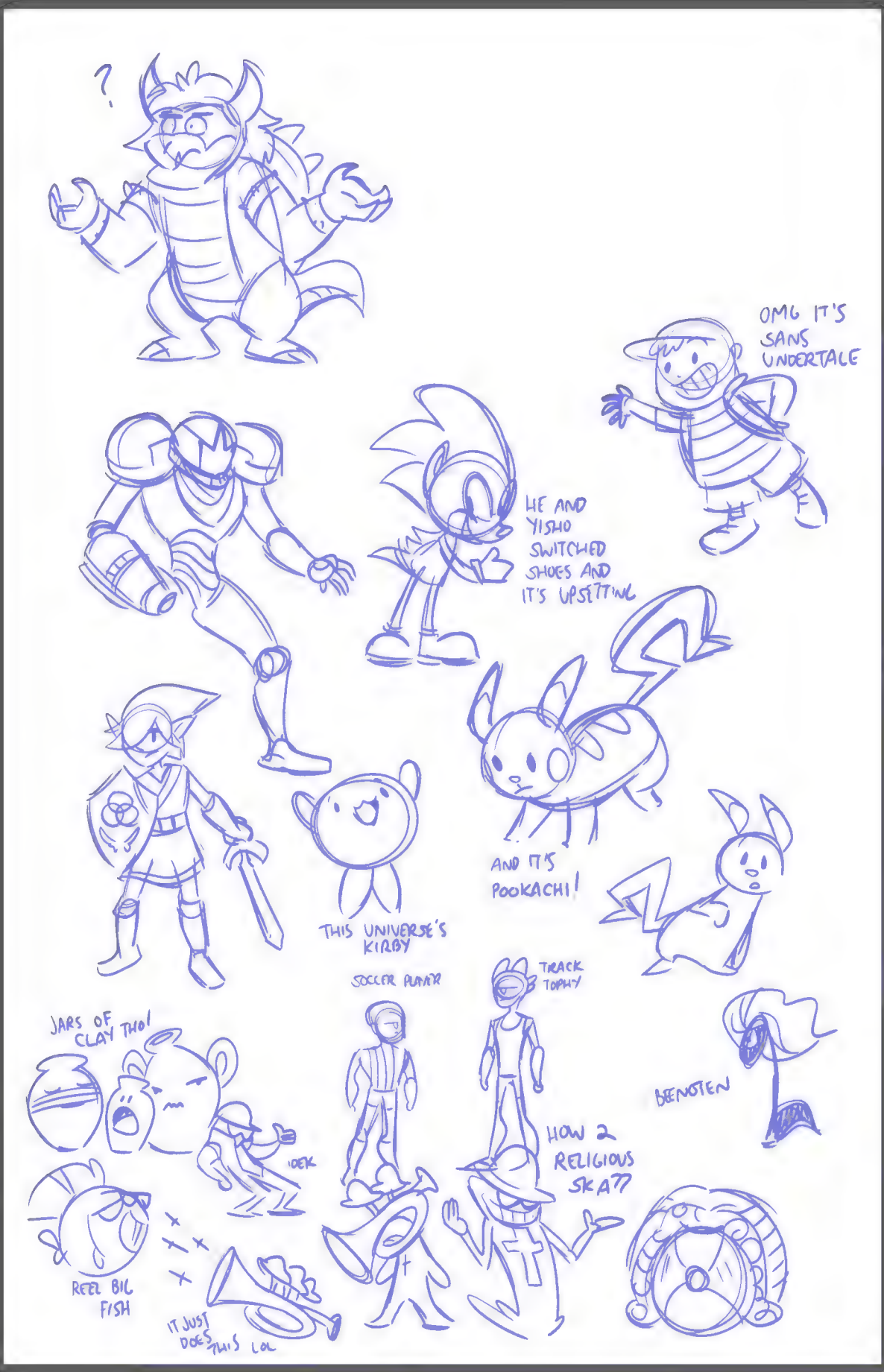
While I worked out Eslira pretty early, I wasn't sure completely on how the other princes were supposed to look!

This was mostly me trying to work out their hair styles, scarves and glasses.



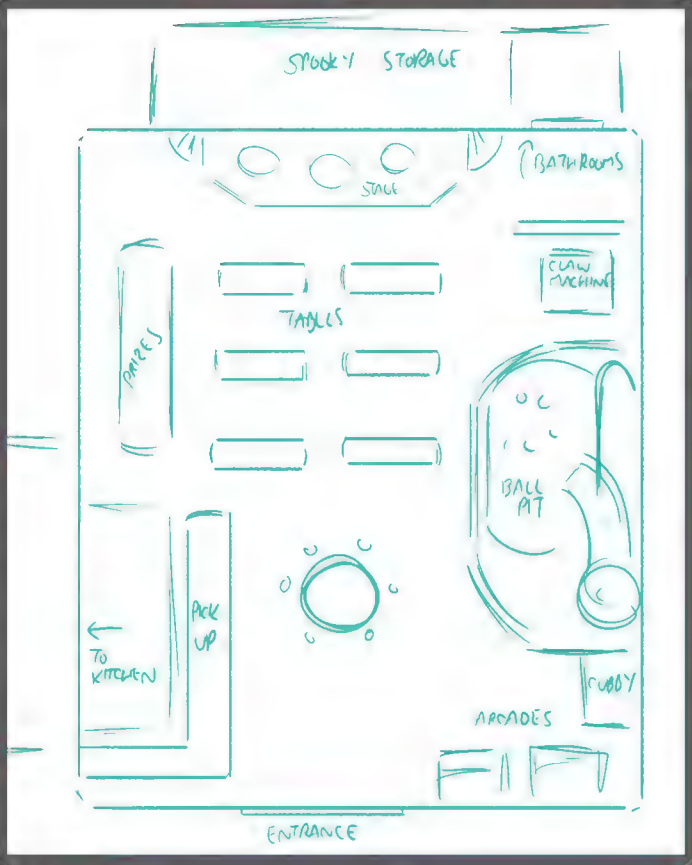
Development sketches for Trophy City!

Some of the more abstract music guys were supposed to represent the CDs under Asriel's bed...classical, jazz and religious ska.



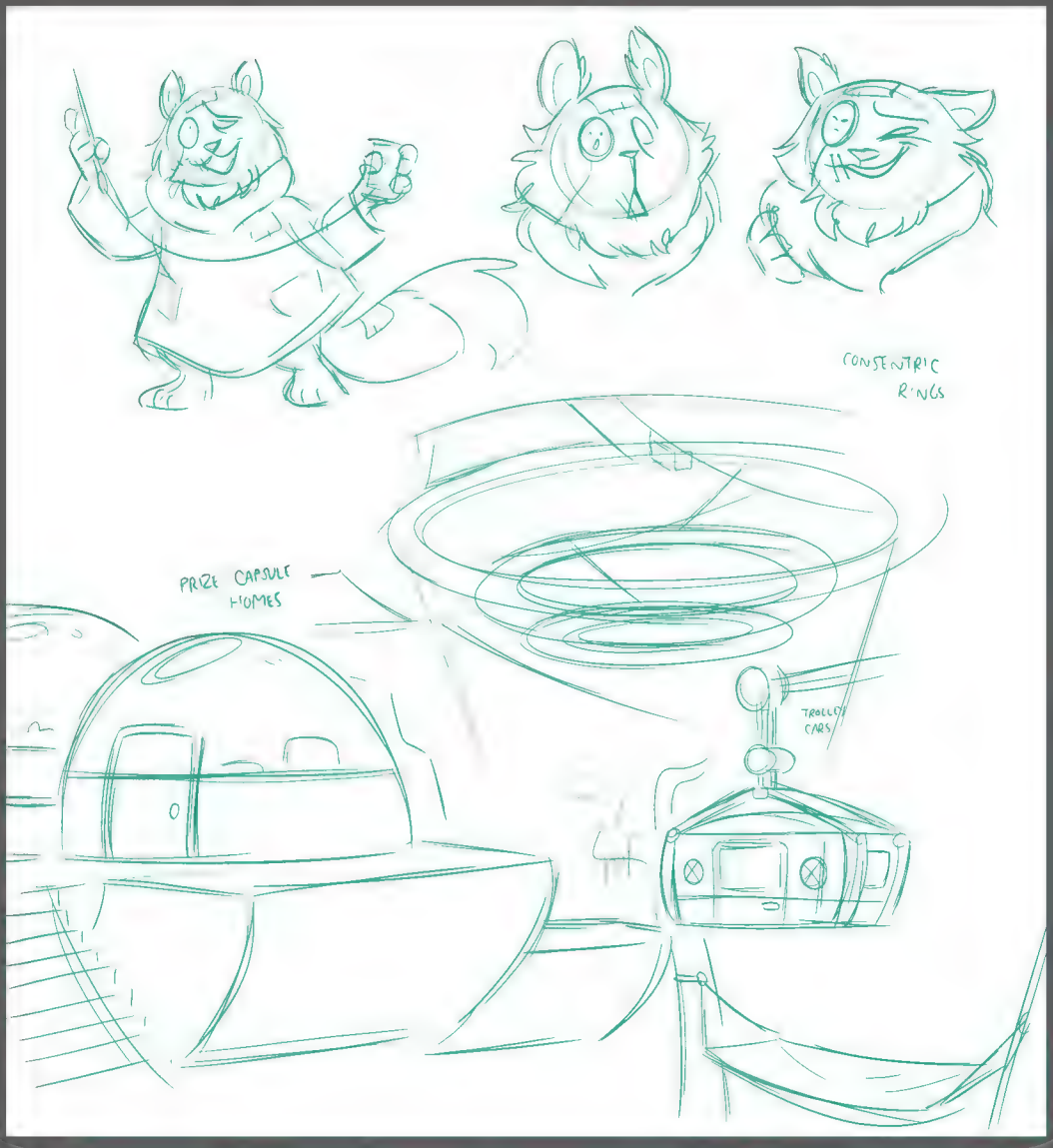
More Trophy City NPCs. I think I was originally going to have a joke with Susie and knockoff Bowser, and never got to it. A lot of terrible puns that never got used...perhaps for the better.

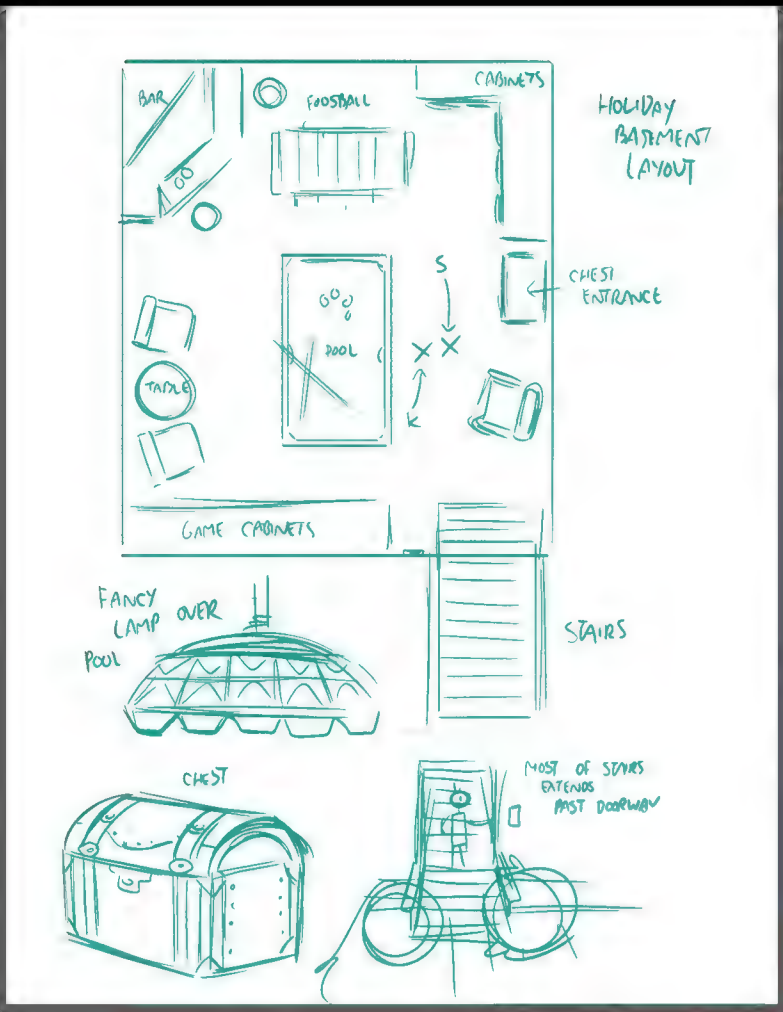
Rainbow Jungle sketches! The actual debut of the amazing Handy Snake!
Honestly figuring out how to do the Thunder Hills was kind of a pain.



A few more things for the pizzeria and the Rainbow Jungle / Claw Mountain area!

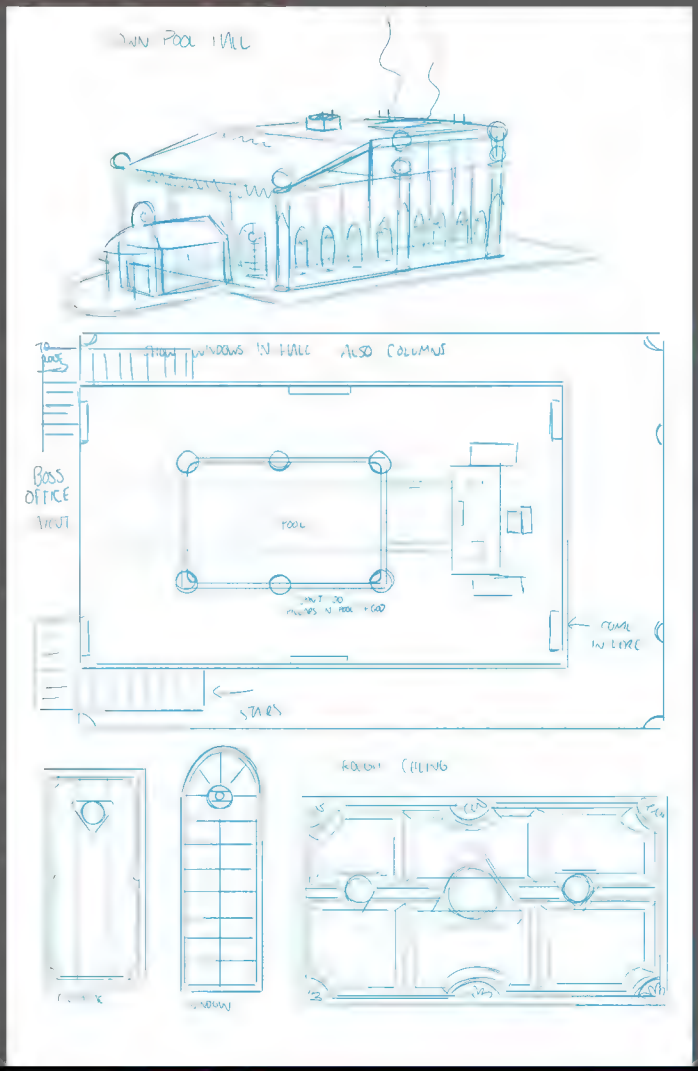
Unlike with DOFP, I actually thought to try and make a bunch of layouts for areas I reused a few times, which was definitely for the best.



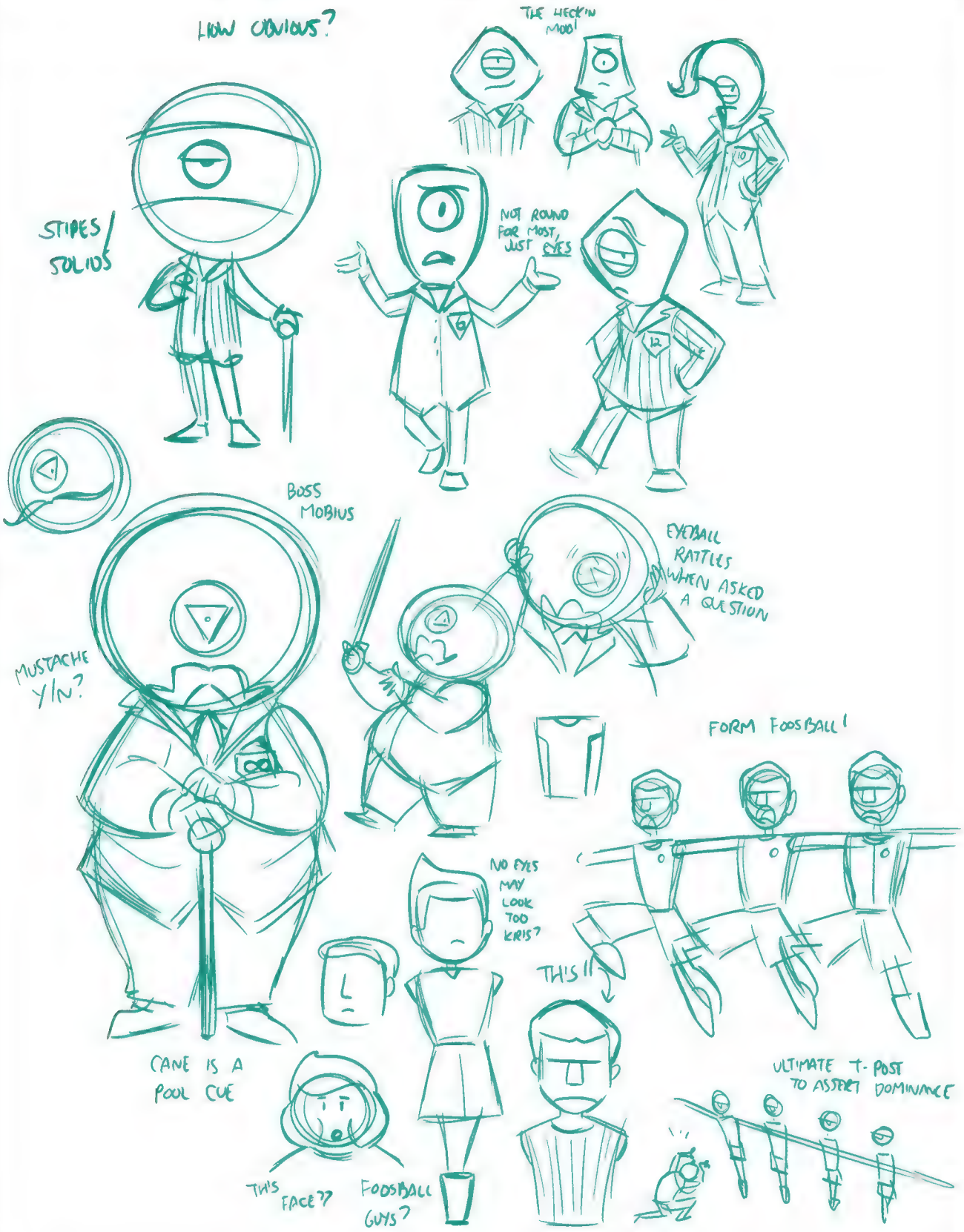


Layouts, layouts, layouts!!

This stuff might seem boring, but honestly I'd recommend doing it if you draw comics. It really helps to "set the stage" and know where all the characters are in the scene.

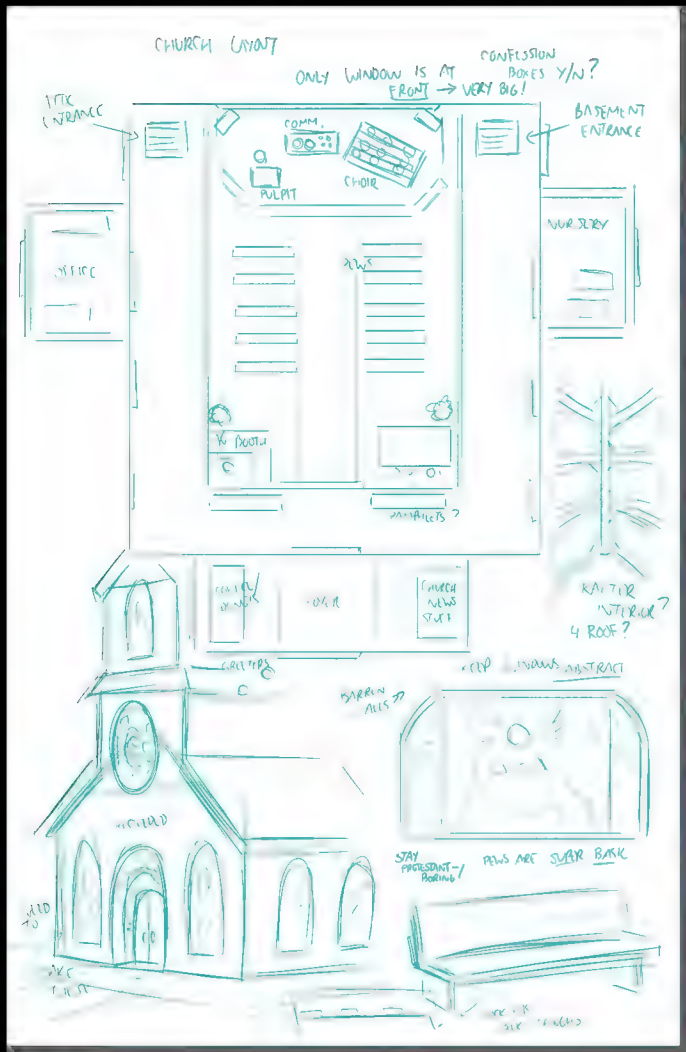


Everything in Pool Town Hall had to have a billiards motif, so I was just trying to work out stuff that would be easy to copy over and over.



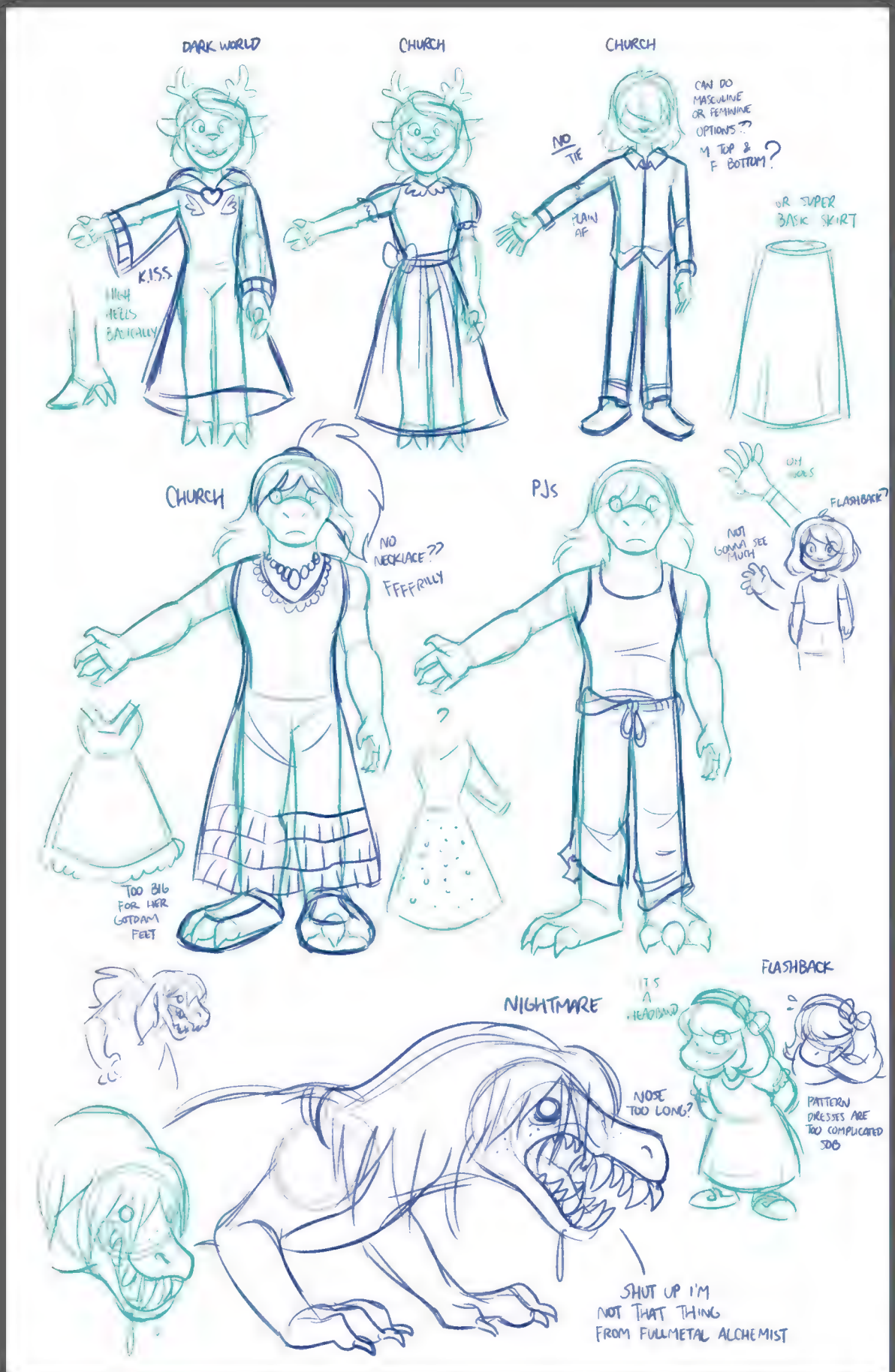
Working out the looks for more NPCs in the Town Hall and University, especially the pool mob!

Have you ever looked closely at foosbal players? They're heckin' weird.

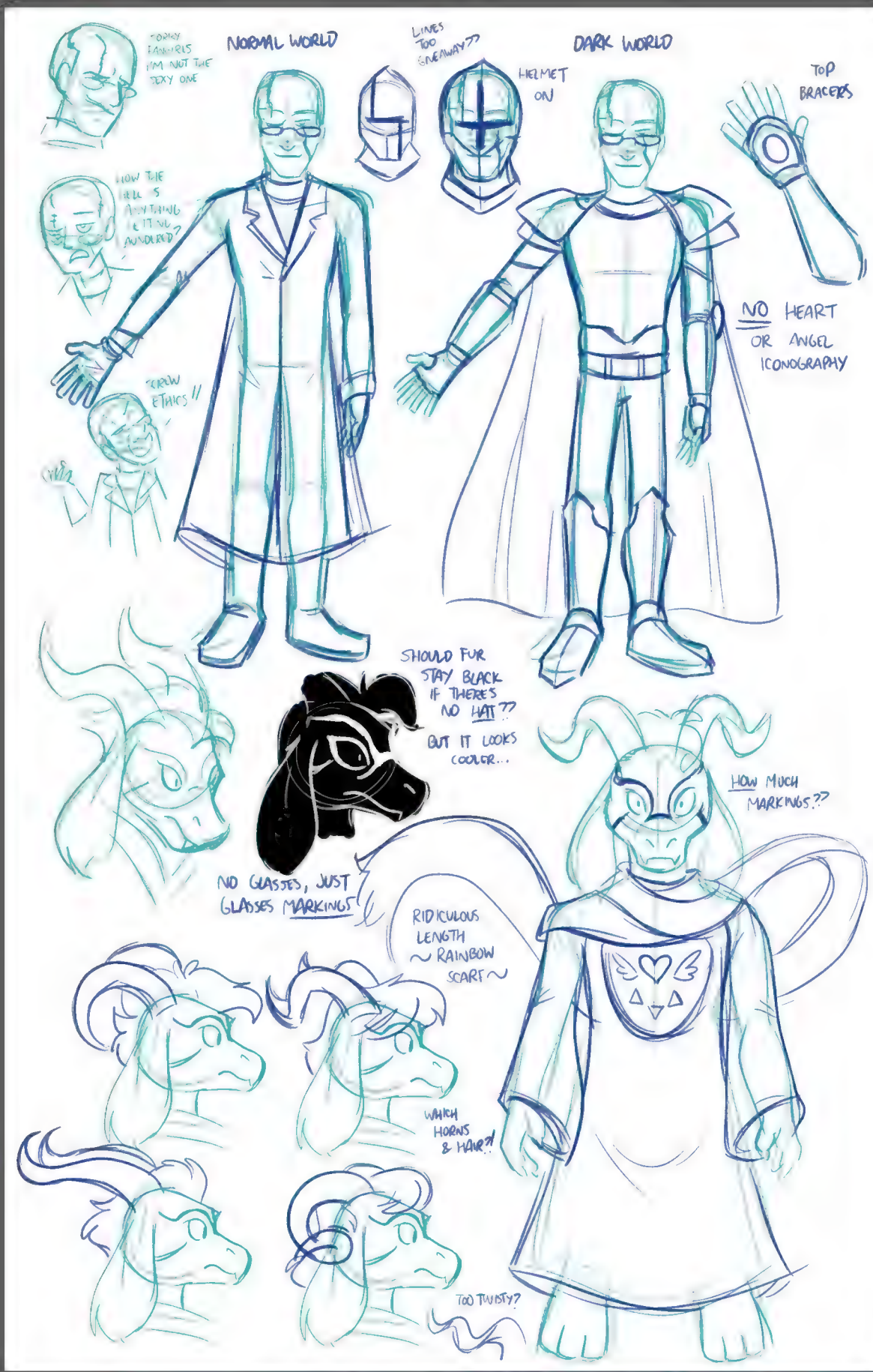


The church and Dark World for it didn't have much in the way of NPCs, so all the stuff for that was just focusing on the layouts and backgrounds.

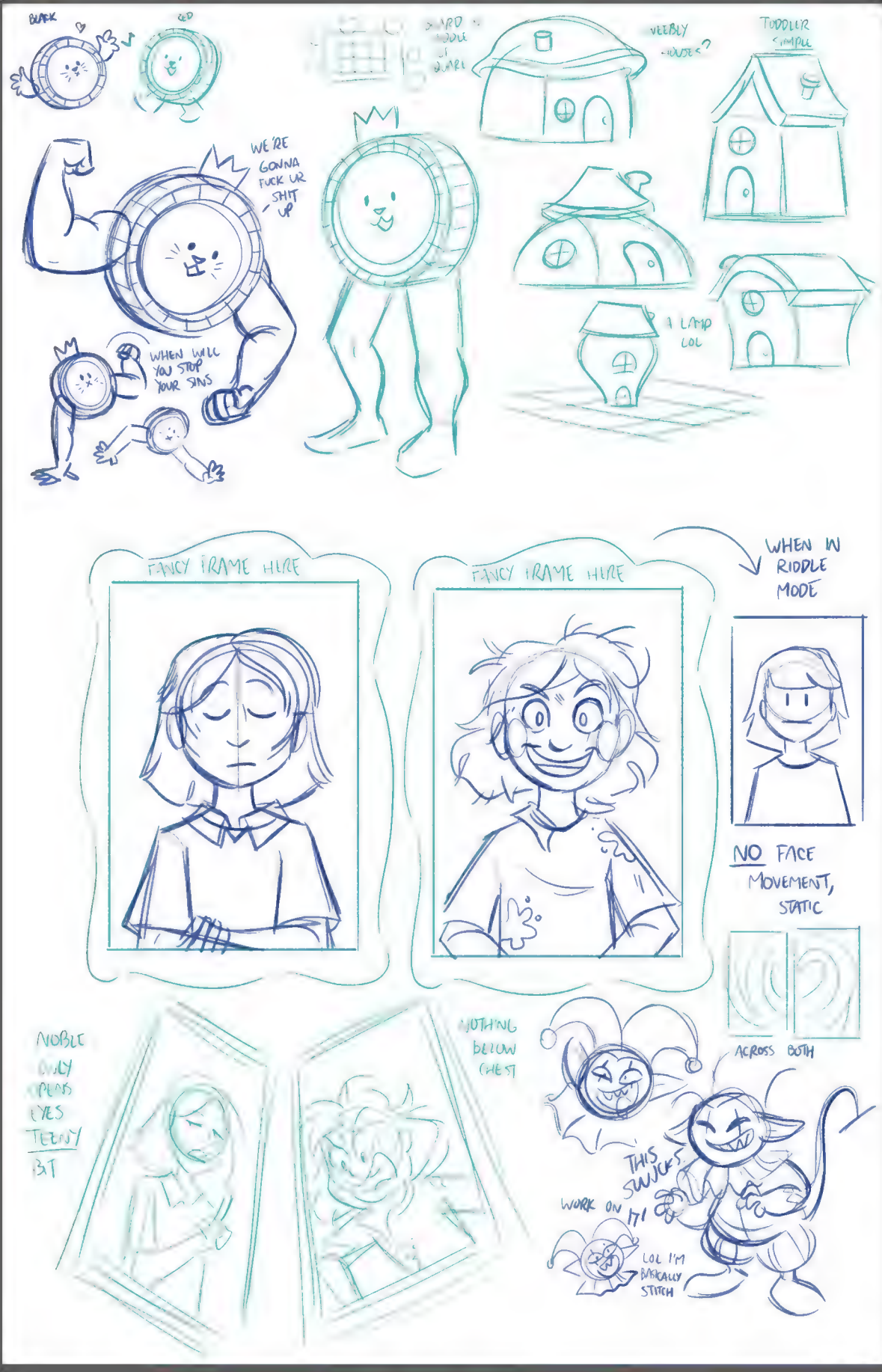
Turns out that making your backgrounds mostly rocks, sticks and snow makes them pretty easy to figure out. Yay!



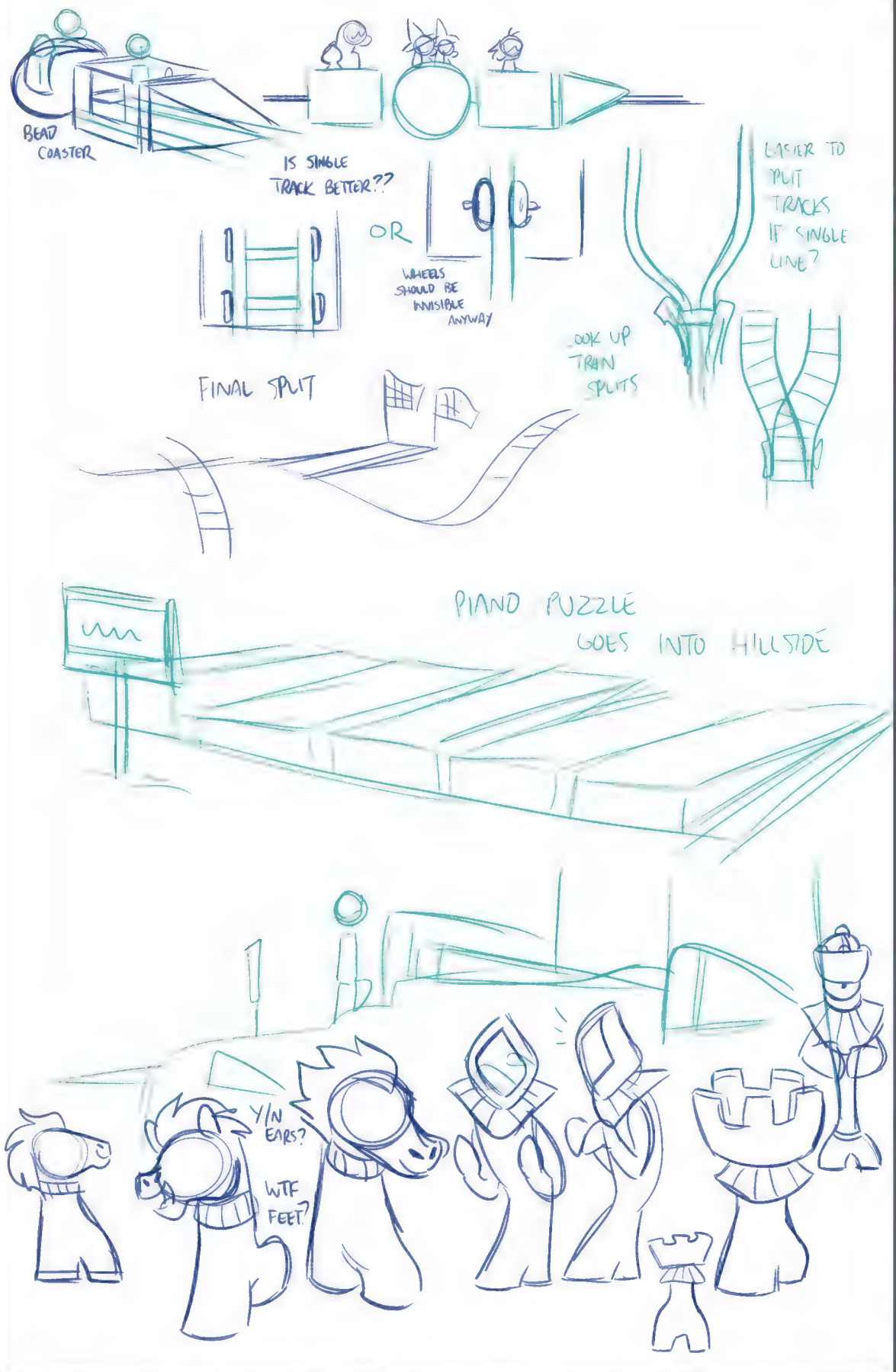
Costume (and some form changes!) I started working out these about halfway through the comic! I think a number of these ended up changing a bit anyway.



Probably the most spoilery sketch page, so I couldn't show this one for awhile! Worked out Gaster's outfits pretty quickly, but trying to figure out horns and hair for King of Hyperdark took a bit more.



Also, did a couple area sketches for Whitestone Isles around here! The little checker guys are way too fun. Also hey, a first attempt at Jevil! I don't think I was super happy with it.



A few more loose sketches trying to work out some of the various puzzles in the Whitestone Isles, as well as how the other chess pieces might look. The coaster was surprisingly difficult to work out!

Extra Fun Stuff

Susie with bed hair! This was probably done for an ask or somesuch.

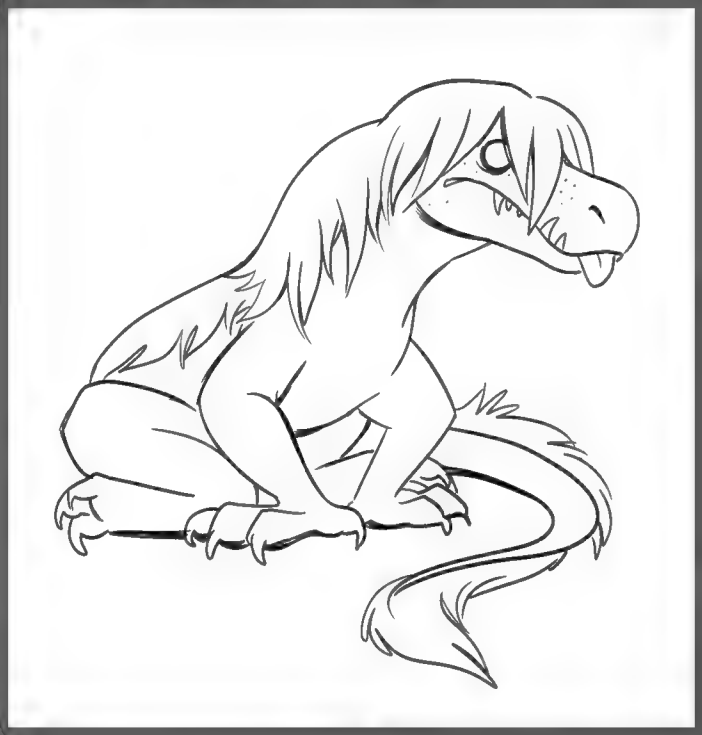
He sure does do lots.

I completely forget why I drew this.

The gang looking so nice in all their dresses!

The Knight's true identity, finally revealed...

What if the Holidays shed their antlers like reindeer usually do? Who knows, but it has the potential to be pretty funny.



Various Nightmare Susies compiled from asks.

That dress really isn't going to fit now!

Why did I draw this? Dunno, it seemed really funny to me at the time.

Definitely showing my age with the Homestar Runner references...but again, it just popped into my head and I thought it was funny.

I wanted to show off all the princes with their scarf colors...and also try and draw them a little closer to the canon style!

Bonus King of Hyperdark and Asriel just for funsies!

By popular request: some other results of the Suselle request livestream!

Includes some cozy moments, recreating that Lady and the Tramp scene, a sneaky kiss, and Susiezilla with plucky reporter Noelle!

More requests!

Susie carrying Noelle in the dark world, a bit of hair brushing, a tender moment outside the hospital, and Susie tries to teach Noelle to swear!

More requests!

Noelle admiring those teeths, Noelle really CAN fly outside the ferris wheel, Noelle gives Susie a bear hug, and Susie deals with the Dark World mouse problem in her own way!

Acknowledgements

Thank you so much for reading through this fancomic! The response I've gotten from this long-running project has been nothing short of incredible! I'm blown away by just how many people have enjoyed this series...even making fanart or fanfic for it! Words can't express my gratitude.

I do want to express gratitude in a few particular directions! Thank you Rebmakash, who was always there to read and review early work, and to bounce ideas off of. A huge thanks to everyone in the Skybox Discord server, whose enthusiasm and encouragement were a huge part of making sure I kept on track to finish. Also, a huge thanks to close family and friends, especially those who helped me through a rough period when I had to hiatus due to a wrist injury.

And naturally, thank you to Toby Fox, for once again making a story with such wonderful characters that I couldn't help but want to write more with them!

If you enjoyed this story, please consider following me on social media for more of my work and any upcoming projects! Also, be sure to check out my original comic 'The Skybox', which is completed and available for you to read in its entirety!

The Skybox - https://skybox.thecomicseries.com/
Tumblr - http://lynxgriffin.tumblr.com
Twitter - https://twitter.com/lynxgriffin
Pillowfort - https://www.pillowfort.social/LynxGriffin
Picarto - https://picarto.tv/lynxgriffinarts

Thank You!

Kris, where the HELL are we?!!
Wait...we're on the last page??
Why would there be a page AFTER the Acknowledgements?!...